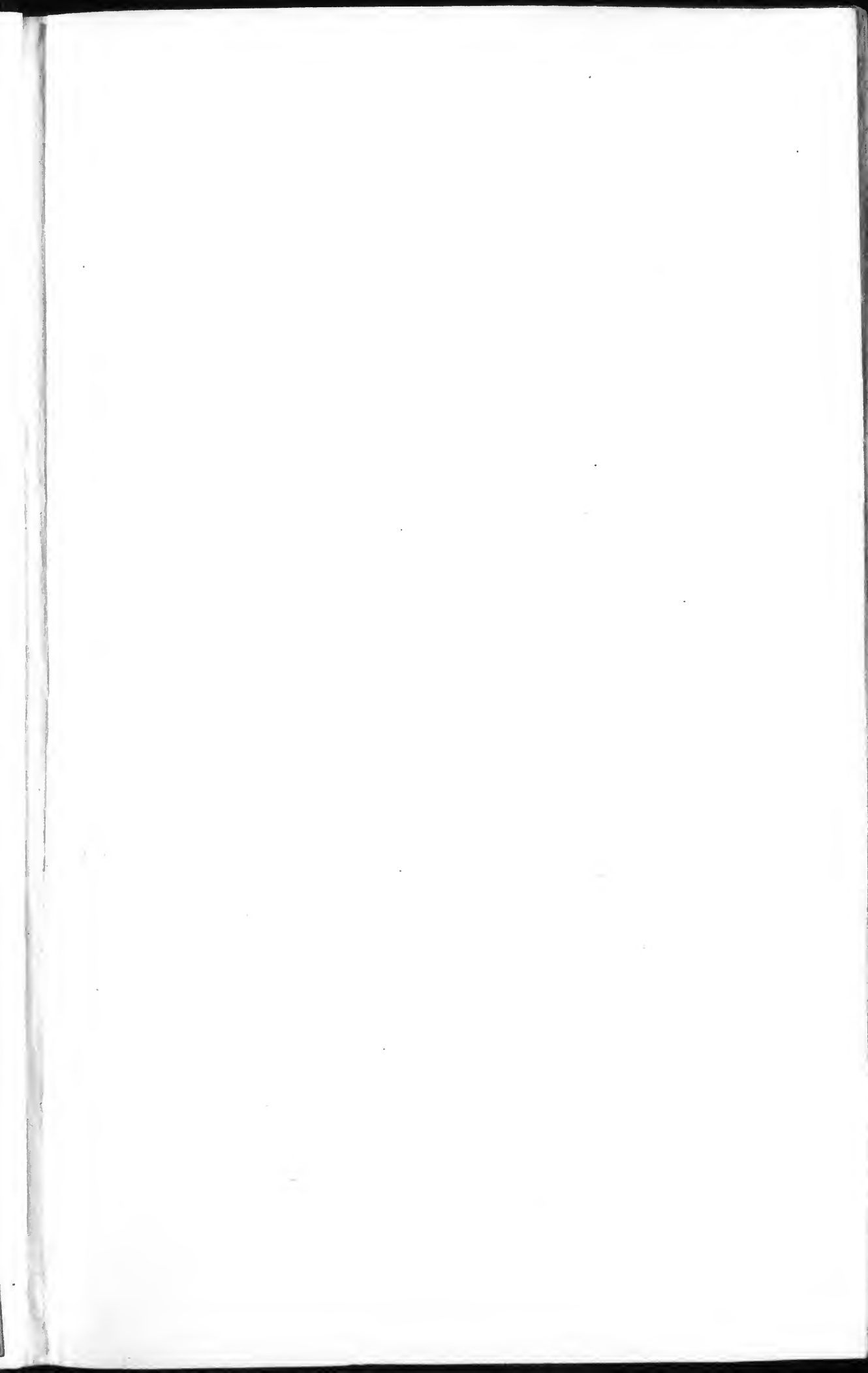


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THE LIFE

OF THE

181

REV. ROWLAND HILL, A.M.

BY THE

REV. EDWIN SIDNEY, A.M.

---

Quitting, with daily labour, all my pleasure,  
To gain, at harvest, an eternal treasure.

HERBERT.

---

LONDON:

BALDWIN & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1834.





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TO THE

RIGHT HON. ROWLAND, LORD HILL,

OF ALMAREZ AND OF HAWKSTONE,

G. C. B., G. C. H., K. T. S., K. M. T., K. S. G., D. C. L.,

COMMANDER OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES,

&c. &c. &c.,

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IN THE FULL ASSURANCE HOW GRATIFYING

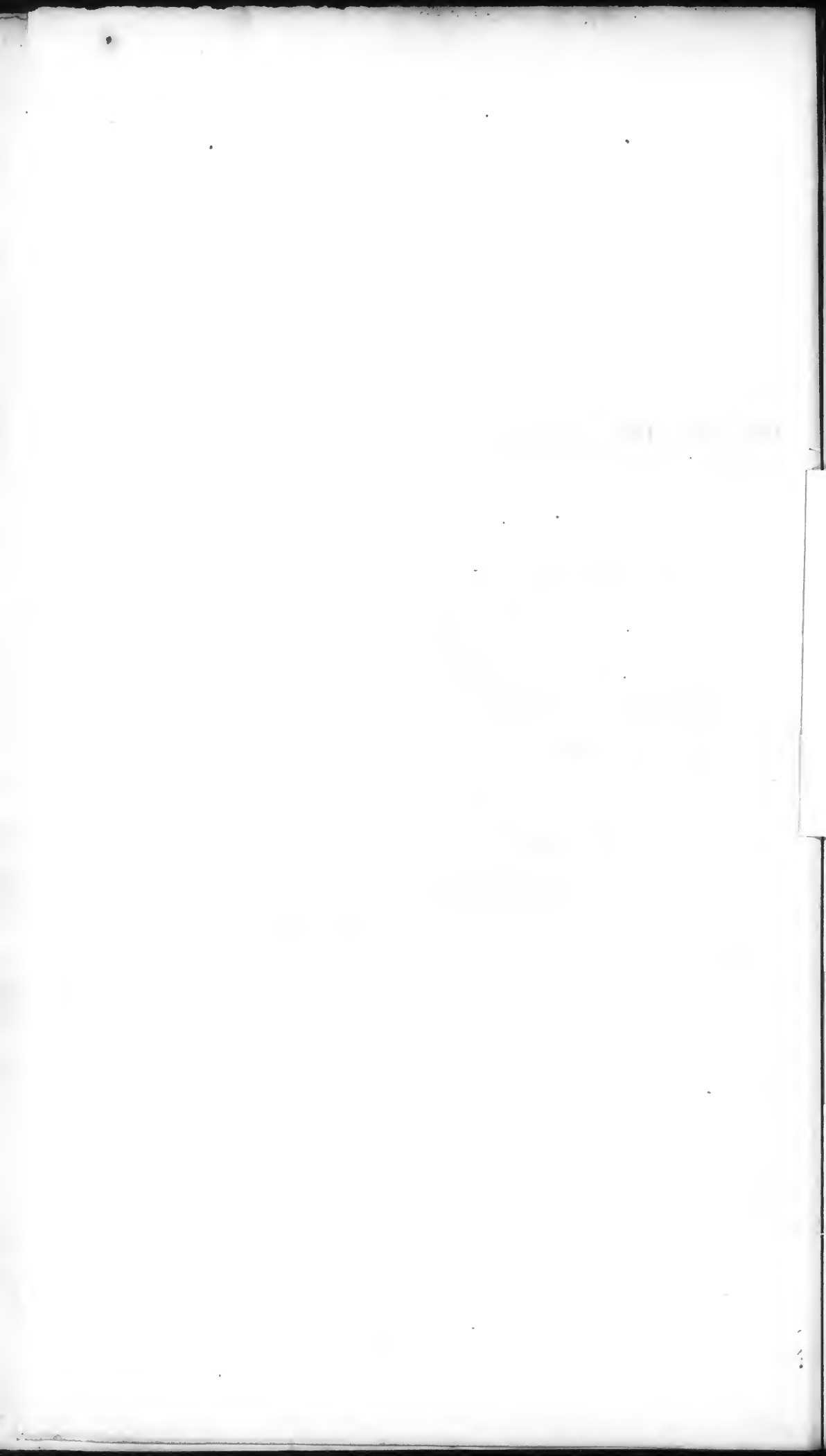
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## ERRATA.

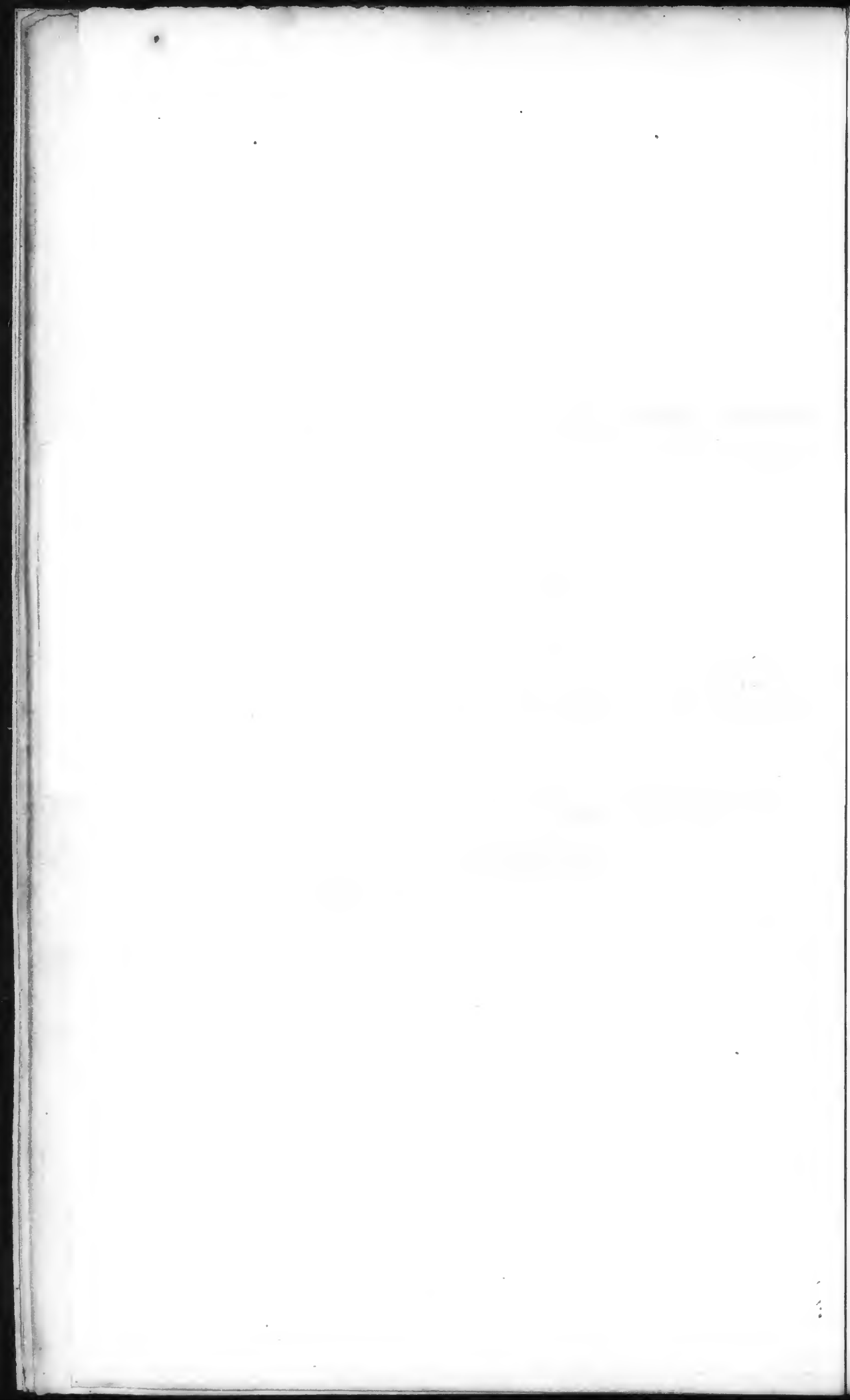
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Page 158, note, *for the* "Whole Duty of Man," *read* "Complete Duty of Man."

Page 183, line 15, *for* more, *read* meæ.

Page 280, line 1, *for* —— and are, *read* —— and —— are.

Page 297, line 8, Page 383, line 9, *for* langour, *read* languor.



## PREFACE.

---

THE last evening I ever spent with Mrs. Rowland Hill, she expressed a wish, that if I survived her venerable and beloved husband, I should write an authentic narrative of his remarkable life, and I promised her that I would, if possible, fulfil her desire. Mr. Rowland Hill, acquiescing in this request, bequeathed me all his papers, "*to be used at my discretion.*" I have now performed my promise, but with more haste, on account of the anxiety of his friends, than was convenient or advantageous : with what *discretion* I must leave others to determine. My readers, however, will doubtless consider the unique character I have had to portray, and will recollect that Mr. Hill's truly solid excellencies were mingled, even in public, with a vivacity and humour peculiar to himself. Had I mentioned only serious facts, it might have been justly remarked, that, excellent as the individual appeared, it was not *Rowland Hill*. Still, I trust, it will be seen in these pages, that his true piety, christian benevolence, and deep spirituality, more than atoned for any trifling singularities of his nature, or sallies of wit, which were mostly accompanied with so much kindness, that, like a medicine given in sweetmeats, the bitter was seldom tasted.



I have made such selections from the papers of my affectionate guardian as I thought most useful and interesting; and if I have erred, I can only plead my inexperience as an author; but most truly can I add, that it has been my aim not to give the slightest pain to the feelings of any human being. Mine has been a task of no ordinary delicacy and responsibility; and while I have not concealed my own opinions, I hope they have been expressed in a spirit of christian charity towards such as may differ from my views.

Amongst the papers left for my use, I found letters and manuscripts of the late Sir Richard Hill, together with an interesting account of his conversion and early experience. I intended, at first, to have extracted largely from these documents in the course of this volume; but it was suggested to me, that by so doing, I should too much interrupt the thread of my narrative, and that they were much more proper for a *Life of Sir Richard Hill*. Many years ago a manuscript, containing five sermons on "Charity, or Brotherly Love," by Walker, of Truro, was given to Mr. Rowland Hill, which he intended to have printed with a memoir of the author, and to have dedicated the volume to his Surry chapel congregation. In the notice of Mr. Walker's Life, Mr. Rowland Hill observes of the sermons—"these have been in my possession for a considerable time; yet on a re-perusal of them with a judicious friend, it struck me forcibly, whether, in my fast declining days, I could leave behind me a more profitable tes-

timony of my high respect and real regard to the congregation I have so long served, than to print these sermons for their serious perusal and prayerful consideration." I may possibly be induced to form a small volume from these interesting portions of the papers of my departed relative.

To those who have kindly assisted me with materials for the work, I beg to offer my sincere thanks, particularly to the Rev. George Clayton, the Rev. George Collison, the Rev. John Griffin, Mr. Jones, of the Religious Tract Society, and the members of Surry chapel who have sent me letters of Mr. Rowland Hill. I am likewise much indebted to the kindness of O. P. Wathen, Esq., John Broadley Wilson, Esq., Samuel Long, Esq., (the executor both of Mr. Rowland Hill and his assistant, Mr. Theophilus Jones) as well as to Mrs. James, (late Mrs. B. Neale) Miss Sheppard, and to others whose names appear in the course of the volume. Though differing from some of these friends in minor views, I trust we are all united in the common ties of christian love and goodwill, looking for salvation to one common Saviour, and believing in the essential operations of the Holy Spirit on the heart, none of which is more prominent than that of *charity*, the very bond of perfectness.

Though sincerely respecting the conscientious scruples of others, I cannot help venturing to express my devoted attachment to our established church, and my conviction that its connection with

the state has been, and I hope will long continue to be, a blessing to our land. If we look at the present aspect of religion amongst us, I am firmly convinced that our establishment need not shrink from comparison, both as respects its own internal brightness, and the distant reflection of its light, with any other christian community on earth. The ministers of religion should be suited to every grade of society: from their ranks the gentleman should be able to select a profitable companion, the inquirer a judicious guide, and the poor man a kind and compassionate friend; and, happily, men endued with such requisites for their sacred office can be at this moment abundantly supplied, from the ranks of our parochial clergy. Increasing holiness to purify, is the surest forerunner of power afforded from on high to protect our church, and the zeal, diligence, and piety of her ministers, will prove a more certain defence, than all the splendors of worldly grandeur, the policy of worldly wisdom, or the support of worldly strength.

I have now only to request that the friends of Mr. Rowland Hill will confide to me such letters, or other materials, as they may think useful for any future edition of his life, and to add, that I shall be truly obliged, if I have fallen into any accidental error, relating either to persons or things mentioned in these pages, to be informed of my mistake, that I may correct it.

*Acle, near Norwich, March 22nd, 1834.*

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THE LIFE  
OF  
THE REV. ROWLAND HILL.

---

CHAPTER I.

*Antiquity of the Hill Family.*

THE distinguished family of the Hills is both ancient and widely extended. It is probable that their original seat was at Hulle, now called Court of Hill, an elevated and beautiful spot on the south side of a hill, named the Titterstone Clee, in the chapelry of Nash, and parish of Burford, in the county of Salop. Mr. Blakeway, a very eminent and accurate Shropshire antiquary, informs us that the earliest notice he has found of them is in the 30th of Edward I, in a deed granted to certain persons by the prior and monks of Worcester, and which is attested, among other witnesses, by William and Adam de la Hull; to the former of whom it is also upon record that lands were granted, by William de Mortimer, canon of Hereford, at a period of as early a date as December 13th, 1311. Grants of land, it has likewise been ascertained, were made to the then existing chaplain of Nash, by



William de la Hulle, to pray for the souls of himself, Alice his late wife, and two others, in the 5th of Edward III. William de la Hulle had a son called Hugh de Hull of Hull, who married and removed into the north-eastern quarter of Shropshire, and from him was descended Sir Rowland Hill, the first protestant lord mayor of London, who died without issue, and bequeathed his large estates to the children of his sisters. From a younger son of this branch of the family, who was a person of consideration in the reign of Henry VI, descended a Rowland Hill, styled of Hawkstone, in 1592, who was father of Rowland Hill, born in 1594, and he of another Rowland, born in 1623, who died and was buried at Hodnet, in November, 1700. His eldest son of his own name died unmarried, and Richard his second son became the great founder of this branch of the family. This remarkable person was born March 23, 1654. He was educated at the grammar school in Shrewsbury, and entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1675. He became a fellow of his college, and is reported to have entered into deacon's orders, which was no doubt the case, as there is good authority for the fact that king William III highly commended "his vigilance, capacity and virtue," in the exercise of his clerical functions. Mr. Hill was engaged by Laurence Earl of Rochester, on account of his distinguished talents, as tutor to his son Lord Hyde, and, while in this situation, he was noticed by the Earl of Ranelagh, paymaster of the forces to king James, and continued in the same office by king William, on whose recommendation he was appointed deputy paymaster to the army sent into Flanders in 1691. In this office, which he held during the whole war, he acquitted

himself with great reputation. He prevented, by his conciliatory and judicious conduct, the mutiny of the soldiers for want of pay, during a whole campaign, and was in very high credit with the Dutch. Nay, it has been even said that he sometimes could raise money upon his own credit, when that of king William failed; and it is certain that he steered through circumstances of the greatest embarrassment with admirable ability and prudence. During this war, in the intervals of his employment with the army, Mr. Hill was occasionally sent as envoy extraordinary to the princes allied with William against the power of France, and, at the peace of Ryswick, was despatched in the same capacity to the court of Turin, and on his return home was made a lord of the treasury. In this office he continued till the accession of queen Anne, when Lord Godolphin obtained the Treasurer's staff, and the treasury was taken out of commission; but he was made a lord of the admiralty, a station which he occupied till the Earl of Pembroke, on the death of the Prince of Denmark, was appointed lord high admiral.

When the Duke of Savoy, who had joined the cause of France, having been both neglected and insulted by Louis XIV, began to repent his defection from the allies, Mr. Hill was chosen to take advantage of these symptoms of regret, and was sent out as minister plenipotentiary, and envoy extraordinary, to all the states of Italy, with the exception of that of the pope. At Turin he met with a most gracious reception, and concluded in October, 1703, by consummate management and skill, a treaty of great importance, which he always regarded as the highest achievement of his political life, and has recorded it

in an epitaph written by himself for his tomb at Hodnet. He received another nomination, of a similar kind, in 1710, but was obliged by the effects of a painful disease to decline the journey.

These various employments enabled Mr. Hill to amass a splendid fortune. His upright father, surprised at the rapid increase of his wealth, said, "My son Dick makes money very fast; God send that he gets it honestly." This apprehension was however groundless, for Speaker Onslow observes, "his estate was very large, all acquired by himself, but without any reproach as to the manner of it, that I ever heard of." In fact, during the severe scrutiny that took place, at the commencement of the reign of queen Anne, into the conduct of the public men of the last reign, and when Mr. Hill's own patron Lord Ranelagh was punished by expulsion for wrong conduct in his office, not even a whisper of calumny was breathed against him. He was considered a man of virtue equal to his abilities, beloved by all parties, and has been remarked as an instance of the real wisdom and policy of strict and unbending uprightness. In the latter part of his life he retired to Richmond, where he attracted most of the eminent persons of his day, and was much noticed by the royal family; the more so, perhaps, because, though a tory, he was a zealous defender of the Hanoverian succession. He was strongly urged to accept a bishopric, which he refused, but was elected fellow of Eton; and it is said that he wished to become provost, as Sir Henry Wotton had been under similar circumstances, but he died, without attaining this object of his desires, on July 11, 1727, at the advanced age of seventy-seven. He is known by the name of the *Great Hill*, "a title"

says Mr. Blakeway, in his history of the sheriffs of Shropshire, "to which he is justly entitled, from the number of affluent families which he founded."

It is to this celebrated individual that the family of the late Rev. Rowland Hill are indebted for the baronetcy and the mansion at Hawkstone. His next brother, John, born March 23rd, 1655, settled at Wem, in Shropshire; and for his son, the late Sir Rowland Hill, he procured the title of baronet, and built the house which had the honor to be the birth-place of the venerable individual, whose life, devoted to the service of God, and the interests of his fellow-creatures, we are now about to trace.

The Rev. Rowland Hill was the sixth son of the last mentioned Sir Rowland Hill, baronet, of Hawkstone, in the chapelry of Weston, and parish of Hodnet, under Red Castle, in which one of his ancestors was confined for his adherence to the cause of Charles I. He is generally supposed to have been the fourth son, which mistake has originated from its not being known that two brothers, born before him, died in infancy. He was born at Hawkstone, on August 23rd, 1745. His mother, Lady Hill, was the daughter of Sir Brian Broughton, of Broughton, baronet, and on her death, Sir Rowland Hill married Mary, widow of Thomas Powis, Esq., and daughter of German Pole, Esq. of Radbourn, in the county of Derby, by whom he had no issue. Sir Rowland Hill was sheriff of Shropshire in 1732, and was elected member of parliament for the city of Lichfield, in 1734 and 1740. The name of Mr. Rowland Hill's eldest brother was Richard, afterwards, on the death of his father, Sir Richard Hill, baronet, and who was well known as the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, published on the

Oxford expulsion in 1768, and of many other pamphlets, particularly those connected with the celebrated controversy between Wesley and the Calvinists. He was also returned to parliament for his native county at six successive elections, and was on all occasions the zealous advocate of the cause of religion and humanity, which he defended with an energy that no hostility or ridicule in the slightest degree diminished, though he had perpetually to encounter both. The next in succession was his brother John, who, at the death of Sir Richard Hill, became possessed of the family title and estates, and was the father of Lord Hill and his gallant brothers, who passed through the dangers of the Peninsular war, survived with honour and distinction, though not without wounds, the carnage of Waterloo, and whose names will ever be conspicuous in the annals of their country's military glory. Sir John Hill was the father of thirteen children, and while five of them escaped the daily chances and perils of war, his eldest son fell a victim to a cold, caught in superintending some improvements in the family estates, most sincerely regretted by every one who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance, or knew his kind and excellent disposition. The present Sir Rowland Hill, baronet, and member of parliament for Shropshire, is the son of this lamented gentleman, whose death occasioned Mr. Rowland Hill a poignancy of grief which it required all the powers of his habitual resignation to the divine will to calm and subdue. It was the distinguished lot of Sir John Hill to have five sons in the battle of Waterloo, and it was his singular happiness in his old age, to welcome them all, full of fame and honours, in the mansion of his family; and on one occasion it was remarked that

there sat on the same side of his table the Rowland Hills of three generations—the subject of these memoirs, Rowland Lord Hill, and the present baronet of that name. The delight enjoyed by the aged father was rendered, if possible, even more exquisite by the manner in which he was received, as the parent of such heroes, by his late Majesty George the Fourth, who welcomed him with unusual cordiality, saying with his own peculiar grace, “I am extremely happy to see the father of so many brave sons.”

Mr. Rowland Hill had another elder brother, Thomas, who resided at Prees, in Shropshire, and a younger one, Robert, of the Hough, in Cheshire, who was the incumbent of preferment in the gift of his family: he was also a magistrate, and the father of John Hill, Esq. attorney-general of Chester, and twelve other children. His youngest brother was the Rev. Brian Hill, who lived at Weston, near Hawkstone, and was long the intimate friend of bishop Heber. Mr. Brian Hill was a man of very refined understanding, and was both a poet and a scholar, but of retired habits. He was prevented, by conscientious scruples, from accepting any benefice in the church, to whose doctrines and liturgy he was, nevertheless, ardently attached. He was the author of a religious poem, called *Henry and Acasto*, and of *Travels through Sicily and Calabria*. He was educated at Queen's College, Oxford, and was chaplain to the Earl of Leven and Melville.

There were two sisters in this remarkable family: Miss Jane Hill, whose pious and excellent advice to her brother Rowland, when at school and at college, will soon be noticed in this work; and Mrs. Tudway, the lady of Clement Tudway, Esq. member of par-

liament for Wells, in Somersetshire, and for many years the father of the house of commons. Only a few years ago, there were living at the same time, five of these individuals, each of whose ages exceeded seventy years; but the grave has now closed over them all; and the last that survived was the venerable minister of Christ, whose history engages our attention.

When a boy in the midst of his family, little Rowland was much noticed for the liveliness of his manner, and that redundant flow of spirits which never failed him in his latest years. Once, when yet a child, he was brought into the room to his father and mother, and their company, when somebody said to him playfully—"Well Rowly, and what should you like to be?"—He looked archly towards his father, who was sitting in an arm-chair, and said, "I should like to be a baronet, and sit in a great chair"—an answer altogether the reverse of his untiring activity in after life. Nothing ever escaped the observation of his bright and penetrating eye; persons and things were equally noticed by him, and his original and playful remarks were treasured up by his family for many years. He used, to the latest period of his life, to revert with the liveliest expressions of pleasure to the drolleries of his childhood, and would relate, in his own inimitable manner, the stories his mother had told him of his "pranks" before he went to school. The actions of his earliest days were all indicative of a frank and open mind, and of a character perfectly transparent, with a disposition entirely free from any thing approaching to reserve or concealment; and it was the exceeding openness of his heart, joined to numerous qualities, such as are possessed by few per-



sons in this life, that rendered him so cordially beloved and confided in by all his friends.

Young Rowland, as soon as he was considered of sufficient age by his family, was sent to school at Eton; and it was during the days of his boyhood that the first beams of that spiritual light, which he for so many years reflected in all its purity and brightness, were shed upon his soul. The opening flowers of his mind were consecrated to God; and his conceptions of the truths of religion, at this early age, were so luminous and distinct, that he never saw occasion to alter his first views in any essential particular; and in the midst of all the varied fancies of enthusiasts, which often surrounded and distressed him, he had never, he said, with the warmest expressions of thankfulness to God, been led away from the simple notions of the doctrines of grace he had adopted in the morning of his days.

His brother Richard, who was considerably older than himself, and who had long been impressed with the most serious views of the importance of religion, was made the means of his conversion. He first began to address him, both by reading and conversation, during the Christmas holidays of 1761, with the earnest and truly fraternal desire of winning him to Christ. The first letter, amongst the papers of Mr. Rowland Hill, manifesting the deep anxiety of his brother Richard to be made the means of communicating to the other members of the family the light which had been enkindled in his own bosom, is the following, addressed to him and his brother Robert, at Eton.



*London, 11th Feb. 1762.*

MY DEAR BROTHERS,

THOUGH I direct this to Rowly, yet it is equally intended for one as well as the other of you, and I hope it will find you both pressing forward towards the prize of the high calling of Christ Jesus that is set before you.

Letters to enquire after our poor perishing bodies are common enough, but alas! how few are wrote with a single view of promoting the salvation of our precious immortal souls, even by those, perhaps, who have a great deal of the outward form of religion, but are ignorant of the life and power of it. But surely, whilst we have the Bible in our hands, we can never be deluded to think that God can be pleased with the externals of religion whilst our hearts are far from him. No! the Scripture assures us that none but those who have seen their lost state by nature, and who are made the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, shall ever inherit the promises: and oh! how dreadful is the thought, to be cast out for ever and ever from the presence of God, into that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched; where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Before I was of your age, my dear brothers, it pleased God to shew me the necessity of caring for my soul, but like too many in that season of life, I presumptuously depended on my youth, and thought I might indulge myself a little longer in pleasure, and that I should have time enough to turn to God when I grew older. But now I am well convinced of the folly and wickedness of such deceitful dealing with God, for if he

had cut me off in that state, as most justly he might, I must have been undone for ever. Take care, therefore, my dear brothers, that you do not trifle with God in a matter of so much consequence, and suffer not yourselves to be led away by the bad example of your schoolfellows; but pray earnestly for grace to keep you amidst all the snares and temptations that continually beset you, [and] doubt not but your prayer, if it be offered in sincerity, shall be heard.

I have nothing more to add at present, than, with my sincere prayer that God may take you both to his protection, and enable you to build up one another in the faith of Christ, and that he may bless this letter to your soul's good, and make us all brethren in grace, as well as by nature, to conclude, my dear brothers,

Yours most affectionately,

RICHARD HILL.

Mr. Richard Hill, who was made the instrument of the conversion of his brother Rowland, became himself religious at an early age; and, as he has left in his own hand writing, a very remarkable narrative of his first impressions and experience, the account of these workings of his young mind cannot be deemed unworthy of being here alluded to. He represents himself as having felt, when only between eight and nine years of age, on repeating the catechism one Sunday evening, such a drawing up of his heart to heavenly objects, as made every thing else appear insipid and contemptible. This, however, was but a transient impression, which vanished as soon as he withdrew with the rest of his schoolfellows. He remained about two years longer at school, in Shropshire, where he felt frequent checks of conscience,

and was often much alarmed at the thoughts of death; after which he was removed to Westminster, still pursued by his early convictions which he tried in vain to allay "with Felix's opium, *at a more convenient season I will hear thee.*" He could not extinguish the hidden fire that burned within his soul; and arguing with himself, that as he was not too young to be conscious of his rebellion against God, so his age could not be so tender, but that if he died he must be shut out from his presence, he seems to have remained in the most agonizing suspense between his natural love of worldly amusements, and his consciousness of the necessity of a life of religion. After being four or five years at Westminster, he was confirmed, and made many resolutions of amendment on that occasion; but he found no comfort, no satisfactory evidence of his being in a safe condition. Soon after this, he fell into a state of the gloomiest scepticism: clouds overshadowed him in his way, which was nevertheless occasionally cheered by beams of light and comfort which broke through them. Sometimes he doubted every thing; then he was fully persuaded of all the truths of Christianity; there was no medium: and at length, not finding any permanent satisfaction, he endeavoured for a time, by following eagerly the vain pursuits and evil example of his schoolfellows, and laying aside all inquiries, to divert his thoughts into another channel.

From Westminster he went, at about seventeen or eighteen years of age, to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he remained four or five years, endeavouring, but unable, to lull his awakened conscience into sleep, and even murmuring against God, because he would not permit him to sin with the same relentless satis-

faction he thought he saw in his companions. From Oxford he went abroad for two years, where, to use his own expression, he realized the truth of the words of Horace ;

*Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.*

He was followed by the same convictions, perplexed by the same doubts ; partially convinced by his former reasonings with himself—now a penitent—then involved in a vortex of gaiety and pleasure, in which his conscience would suddenly smite him, and bring him to his knees in prayer, with the most solemn resolutions of amendment. In this state of mind he returned to England in the summer of 1757.

About October, in this year, he was overwhelmed with the most entire conviction of his danger ; he saw the awfulness of God in his wrath ; he no longer doubted of the existence of the Eternal Being, but apprehended that he was the unpardonable victim of his justice, and that having trifled with the workings of the Holy Spirit, he should find no place for repentance, though like Esau he sought it with tears. This so affected him, that a change in his appearance was remarked by his friends. In his distress he went to a clergyman of his acquaintance, from whom he found no relief ; nor could he extract from any source a healing balm for his wounded conscience, nor discover a physician skilled to deal with such a case as his.

The celebrated Mr. Fletcher, of Madeley, at that time tutor to two neighbouring young gentlemen, his relations, was the person to whom at length his attention was directed ; and he made his case known to him in a letter, without mentioning his name, requesting in urgent terms an interview that very night, at an inn

in Shrewsbury. Though he had some miles to walk, Mr. Fletcher came, consoled him by advice, engaged with him in prayer, and left him in a state of comparative ease: nor was this the only occasion on which that remarkable man was the means of contributing to his spiritual comfort. A few years after, as is well known, Mr. Richard Hill, thought it his duty to oppose the Arminian doctrines of his early religious guide: thus the soldiers of Christ often contend about the weapons of their warfare, instead of using them in the common cause of the captain of their salvation.

In 1758, Mr. Richard Hill returned to Oxford, to attend the Vinerian Professor's Lectures on common law, not so much with a view to profit by them, as to have the opportunity of a retreat in his rooms in the college. On the occasion of a sacrament in the chapel, the preparation for the ordinance was so blessed to him as to operate to the great relief of his mind, which was now overpowered with an ecstatic joy in the Redeemer. Certain books which he read, the preaching of Mr. Romaine, whose ministry he soon after attended in London, and intercourse with religious people gave him great comfort; but he soon discovered that real religion does not consist in a series of occasional impulses, and a succession of "frames and feelings," and relapsed in some degree into his former doubts. He was at length brought into a calm and peaceful state of mind, and religion became in him an abiding principle; though, with every other christian, he was sensible of that conflict between the flesh and spirit, which is the surest evidence of the knowledge of our own hearts, and of the work of grace in the soul. He observes, "there are but two things the Spirit shews to the elect, *sin* and *Christ*."

Being himself thus deeply imbued with a sense of the love of God in Christ, and of the value and importance of religion, it was to be expected that Mr. Richard Hill should be earnest in his desire to be the instrument of awakening similar feelings in the minds of the members of his own family. It appears also, from some memoranda in his own writing, that the servants in his father's establishment, and the villagers around the house were the constant objects of his pious solicitude and care. His eldest sister was happily his able and judicious assistant in this work; and under their joint care and advice, the seed sown in young Rowland's mind sprung up and grew with a rapid increase. He seems to have derived much benefit from reading the works of Archbishop Leighton, which his brother Richard sent to him at Eton, accompanied by a letter that contained an allusion to his entering the ministry, and concluded with this advice: "Be diligent in your studies. However human learning may prove a snare to such as are vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, yet in a gracious heart it is very desirable; and if it is your prayer and endeavour that whatsoever attainments you make in profane literature may be subservient to the nobler end of rendering you instrumental to the good of souls, and useful to the church of Christ, there is no fear of your being hurt by those detestable maxims and principles, with which the most admired classical authors abound; but rather will they be the means of discovering to you the blindness and depravity of human nature, and the necessity of seeking that only true wisdom *that cometh from above*, and without which all other wisdom will prove in the end only refined folly. And now, with my sincere prayers that if it be the will of God ever to call you

to the work of the ministry, you may be fitted and prepared by his grace and Holy Spirit for that most important office, and by your steady attachment to our most excellent church, in a season wherein there is so dreadful a departure from the doctrines of her Homilies, Articles, and Common Prayer, may prove yourself a faithful labourer in the vineyard of our blessed Lord, I conclude myself your most affectionate brother, both by nature and grace, Richard Hill." This letter was written in February, 1762; and there is one dated the following month, addressed to both his brothers, in which Mr. Richard Hill expresses great regret at not being able to pay them a visit at Eton, but anticipates the enjoyment of much conversation on religious subjects at Hawkstone in the following summer; and he sends back with it a little treatise, which it seems they had conveyed to him, called "Heavenly Paths."

It was in young Rowland's mind, however, that grace took its deepest root, and whose progress in divine knowledge and experience seems to have given his pious and anxious brother the most unequivocal delight. In the midst of the carelessness and evil example of his schoolfellows, agitated by the wavering of his brother Robert's mind on the subjects which most interested himself, in the pursuit of the attainments of classical literature, and surrounded on all hands by sneers and ridicule, he was running, while yet a boy, his race of glory with an unequalled ardour. To his schoolfellows and to others he declared what God had done in his soul, and was made the instrument, even at that early period, of the conversion of some of them—the first-fruits of the rich harvest of success he reaped in his administrations in after life,



He ever carefully preserved a letter written to him, when at Cambridge, by a youth to whom he had been made thus useful at Eton, and who pours out his soul with all the candid simplicity of boyish friendship, and with an expression of deep religious feeling which would have done credit to a riper age. The decided course of this young Christian had involved him in severe trials; but in adversity, whether in youth or in after days, religion is the Christian's *all*, and then it is that its glory appears.

It seems, from the letter of Rowland's young friend, that a religious society had been formed amongst the converts in the school, but that after his departure, the life which he communicated to it had been less vigorous: they were now on the eve of a revival, and had drawn up some rules and directions for their own guidance. The *fifth* of these is not only interesting as the production of these pious boys, but is intrinsically excellent. "Fifthly, let us take notice of the manner in which our time is spent, and of the strain which runs through our discourse. How often the former is lost in trifles—how often the latter evaporates in vanity! Let us attend to the principles from which our actions flow; whether from the steady habitual love of God, or from some rambling impulse, and a customary propensity to please ourselves? How frequently we neglect to glorify our Creator, to edify our fellow-creatures, and to improve ourselves in knowledge and holiness! Let us observe the frame of our spirits in religious duties—with what reluctance they are undertaken, and with what indevotion they are performed, with how many wanderings of thoughts, and how much dullness of desire. How often in the common affairs of life we feel the inordi-



nate sallies of passion, the workings of evil concupiscence, or the intrusion of foolish imaginations. Let us be careful to register those secret faults, which none but the all-seeing eye discerns. Often review these interesting memoirs. Let us frequently contemplate ourselves in this faithful mirror." After adverting to these rules, his young fellow christian expresses, in the warmest manner, his everlasting obligations to his beloved Rowland for the pains he had taken with him, and earnestly requests an interest in his prayers. These were the first dawnings of his opening day of zealous and successful labours in the cause of his Redeemer.

Towards the latter part of his time at Eton, Rowland was surrounded by a number of fellow-christians, old and young, some of whom had cast a stumbling-block before him by their inconsistencies. His brother Richard, in a very long letter, dated Sept. 30th, 1763, addresses him on this subject; and assures him that "even they, who are really the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, have their spots, and do too often act greatly below the high dignity unto which they are called. Beware, therefore," he continues, "that you be not encouraged to go beyond your christian liberty in any matter, because you see other Christians do so; but whilst you copy their graces, be very careful not to be led aside by their falls and infirmities." Then he adds, with an excellent spirit of frankness and candour, "I am in a particular manner bound to repeat this caution to you with regard to myself, from a consciousness that my example before you has not been such as becometh the gospel; but be assured that this reflection affords me constant matter of humiliation, and that it is the earnest desire of my

heart, to be daily more and more conformed to the image of Christ, and more and more meet to be a partaker of the inheritance among the saints in light."

Favoured as Rowland was at this time with the advice of such a brother, he was not less carefully watched by his truly pious sister Jane; and in addition to the letters of Sir Richard Hill, before alluded to, he treasured up his deeply interesting correspondence with Miss Hill, while at school and at college, to the end of his life. In June, 1764, she writes to announce to him that his going to Cambridge was determined on, and that Sir Rowland appeared to have no objections to his entering upon the sacred office of a minister of God's word. She tells him "you are to be placed for the first year under Dr. Brooke, to whom Sir Rowland has presented poor Moses's living, in Norfolk,<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Frampton, who will continue your tutor. The Lord I trust will enable you to stand against all the fiery darts which will be shot at you at college. Fat bulls of Bashan will encompass you on every side, and you will need to be armed with the whole armour of God." This letter, after some very pious remarks, ends thus—"I cannot conclude without saying how glad we are to find, by Mr. Sleech's letter to my brother, that you are so diligent in your studies: continue to be so, my dear Rowly, and if possible double your diligence, that you may be an ornament to the ministry, which is the prayer of your most affectionate sister, J. Hill." In all her correspondence with him, his sister strongly urges the necessity of diligence in his studies; and she tells him that "human learning is a most desirable jewel in

<sup>1</sup> There were six livings, all of considerable value, at that time in the gift of the Hill family, in Norfolk, with this restriction, that they could only be presented to fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge.

order to set off the lustre of those in a sanctified heart."

In the month of October, 1764, after a previous visit to Hawkstone, where he met with many severe trials, the more felt as he had not the consolation of his sister's presence, on account of her being on a visit at Lord Dartmouth's, he entered upon his important career at Cambridge. An excellent letter from Miss Hill lamenting their not having met before his journey to the university, consoles him under the afflicting opposition he had suffered at home, and exhorts him to prepare for many troubles yet to come, and to "cleave only the more closely by faith to Jesus."

It was the design of Sir Rowland, in sending his son to Cambridge, that he should, by applying to his studies, obtain a fellowship at St. John's, and thus become qualified for presentation to one of the family livings in Norfolk, an intention in which young Rowland acquiesced. He accordingly entered as a pensioner; but subsequent events having determined him to alter his views, he became a fellow commoner, a class of young men, not eligible to fellowships on account of their supposed rank and situation.

Before he went into residence at Cambridge, Mr. Rowland Hill's religious sentiments were much disapproved of by his family; but happily a nobleman of piety, much respected at Hawkstone, defended his views and acted as a check to his opposers. When he entered the university, Mr. Rowland Hill soon encountered the contempt he had expected to find there; and frequently has he said, that he was, merely on the account of his religion, such a marked and hated person, that nobody in the college ever gave

him a cordial smile, except the old shoe-black at the gate, who had the love of Christ in his heart. The report of his piety and zeal soon reached the ears of the well-known Mr. Berridge of Everton, who sought his acquaintance in the following note.

*Grandchester, Tuesday Morning,  
December 18th, 1764.*

SIR,

MR. Thomas Palmer was at my house last week, and desired me to call upon you when I went to Cambridge. I am now at Grandchester, a mile from you, where I preached last night and this morning, and where I shall abide till three in the afternoon—will you take a walk over? The weather is frosty, which makes it pleasant under foot. The bearer of this is Mr. Matthews, who lives at Grandchester mill, at whose house I am. If you love Jesus Christ, you will not be surprised at this freedom taken with you by a stranger, who seeks your acquaintance only out of his love to Christ and his people. I am, for his sake, your affectionate servant,

JOHN BERRIDGE.

Thus to his great joy and comfort began his intercourse with Mr. Berridge, whose ministry he regularly attended, riding every Sunday from Cambridge to his church, whence he hastened back in time for the college chapel; and seldom did it happen that any severity of weather prevented him from spending a portion of his Sunday at Everton. He passed the Christmas of his first year at college with his newly acquired friend and guide at Everton, and there met with many persons, not perhaps altogether

the most judicious, whose views of religion were in unison with his own. Scarcely a week elapsed without intercourse with this excellent, but eccentric old clergyman, and he wrote in raptures to his sister of the happy enjoyment he felt in his society and that of the fellow-christians he met with in his house. She replied to him in these terms: "we rejoice much at the happy Christmas you spent with Mr. B. as well as at the other opportunities you have of conversing with the dear children of God, whose experiences, discourse, and admonition, I trust you will find abundantly blessed to your soul, and that you will not fail to prosper amongst the trees of righteousness, and bring forth much fruit to the honour and glory of that God, who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, and made you to know and experience the felicity of his chosen—but my brother H. and myself both think it proper to give you a caution how you go too frequently to Mr. B. for should that be discovered, I need not tell you the storm it would raise."

On whatever spot the two brothers Richard and Rowland appeared, there they enkindled the flame and shed the lustre of religion; and at the same time their pious sister cast over her narrower sphere the gentle influence of a life dedicated to God, to which was added the rare appendage of a most humble spirit. To no one could we better apply the words of Jeremy Taylor; "like a fair taper, when she shined to all the room, yet round about her own station she had cast a shadow and a cloud, and she shined to every body but herself." While Rowland was at Cambridge confessing Christ and despising the shame, his excellent brother and sister were engaged in the arduous

work of endeavouring to awaken in the servants of their family, and amongst their neighbours, a sense of religion; and their efforts to promote this all-important object formed frequently the subject of their correspondence. In a little book, preserved amongst the papers of Mr. Rowland Hill, there are frequent entries, in the hand writing of his brother Richard, of the happy deaths of their converts and friends. The following is a specimen: "Feb. 6, 1766. This day, being Thursday, about a quarter past twelve at noon, my dear humble faithful servant Giles Archer sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. His disorder was a fever which lasted exactly three weeks—The Lord enable me to follow him as he followed Christ."

It is time, however, to return to the scenes in which Mr. Rowland Hill was personally engaged. His whole soul was bent on promoting the growth of piety in himself and others, and he was made instrumental in awakening an anxiety about eternal concerns in the minds of some few of his fellow-students. Amongst these were his friends Pentycross, Simpson, Robinson, and others, who were imbued with the same spirit of zeal, though they did not possess his fire, energy, and unflinching boldness. But his assiduous efforts were not confined to the gownsmen of the university:—he visited the gaol, and the sick, and commenced preaching in several places in Cambridge, and in the adjacent villages. This unusual proceeding in an undergraduate brought down on him the severest censure from his college, and insults from the populace of the town; the records of which still remain in his own hand-writing, in a sort of irregular diary, which he heads, "Parts of Scripture expounded at different places, what time, and what success." It begins with

“Tuesday, Nov. 26, (1766) at Chesterton,<sup>2</sup> on Matt. vii, 14, *Enter in at the strait gate, &c. &c.*; there was much disturbance, but much less than was expected—some enlargement.” A number of texts, with the names of places, follow this entry, without any remarks of particular interest: he mentions, however, in one case, a vast concourse of people at the castle, and comfort to himself in preaching to them. At length the opposition to the young preacher became very serious and decided; and he wrote to consult the celebrated Mr. Whitefield. The advice he gave to him will be seen in his answer.

*London, Dec. 27, 1766.*

About thirty-four years ago, the master of Pembroke college, where I was educated, took me to task for visiting the sick and going to the prisons—In my haste I said, “Sir, if it displeaseth you I will go no more;” my heart smote me immediately—I repented and went again—he heard of it—threatened—but for fear he should be looked upon as a persecutor, let me alone—the hearts of all are in the Redeemer’s hands—I would not have you give way, no not for a moment—the storm is too great to hold long—visiting the sick and imprisoned, and instructing the ignorant, are the very vitals of true and undefiled religion. If threatened, denied degree, or expelled for *this*, it will be the best degree you can take. A glorious preparative for, and a blessed presage of future usefulness. I have seen the dreadful consequences of giving way and looking back. How many by this wretched cowardice and fear of the cross have been turned into pillars, not of useful, but of useless salt! *Felix quem*

<sup>2</sup> A village near Cambridge.



*faciunt aliena pericula cautum.* Now is your time to prove the strength of Jesus yours. If opposition did not so much abound, your consolations would not so abound. Blind as he is, Satan sees some great good coming on. We never prospered so much at Oxford, as when we were hissed at and reproached as we walked along the street, as being counted the dung and off-scouring of all things. That is a poor building that a little stinking breath of Satan's vassals can throw down. Your house I trust is better founded—Is it not built upon a rock? Is not that rock the blessed Jesus? The gates of hell, therefore, shall not be able to prevail against it. Go on, therefore, my dear man, go on; old Berridge, I believe, would give you the same advice; you are honoured in sharing his reproach and name. God be praised that you are helped to bless when others blaspheme. (Do not drop the Bible and old books—you write good sense—nothing is wanting but to write it in a proper manner. Your friend Hallward is a good example to copy after.) God bless and direct and support you—he will, he will—good Lady Huntingdon is in town—she will rejoice to hear that you are under the cross—you will not want her prayers or the poor prayers of, my dear young honest friend,

Yours, &c. &c. in an all-conquering Jesus,  
To Mr. Rowland Hill, G. W.  
at St. John's College, Cambridge.

This advice, though scarcely consistent with the submission he had promised as an undergraduate, but so much in unison with his own desires, was quite sufficient to determine him to defy all resistance from whatever quarter; and soon after the receipt of Mr.



Whitefield's letter, is the following entry in his diary. "1767, Jan. 1, Thursday, at Chesterton, on John i, 25, 26, on the power of Christ's resurrection; we had the honour of a mob, no other harm was done than the windows broke." "Sunday, Jan. 4, at the castle, on Genesis, iii—on the fall—and a little mobbing." "Thursday, Jan. 8, on Psalm lxii, 12. Comfortable time at Painter's, on the life of faith." He preached four times this week, which he notices, and then continues. "Sunday, at castle, Jan. 18, on 1 Cor. xv, 22, on death. I saw this day the dead corpse of Mary Gilby, when I came to visit her." Wednesday, Jan. 21, at castle, on Gen. xxxii, 26, on earnest prayer, *I will not let thee go except thou bless me.*" Thursday, Jan. 22, at Grandchester, on Psalm xxvi, 12, on Sion's captivity. I had a very bad walk both there and back again. My body was so fatigued, that I had not much power to speak. Father thy will be done." Such varied remarks as the following occur in his hand-writing, in reference to different occasions on which he preached and expounded—"many were drunk; I was confused"—"no mobbing, but very much abused in my way there"—"the people were still, and a tolerable number"—"to a number of dissenters, I hope the Lord kept me from trimming." "Thursday, at castle, on 1 Cor. v, 10, '*We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.*' Two prisoners were condemned to death at the assizes the day before; the Lord enabled me to use terror, with some power and love"—"the people were inclined to mob, but were overawed by the word"—"in a barn for the first time, with much comfort. God send, if I am to live, this may not be my last barn—sweet to rejoice any where, though in a barn." "Some gownsmen

were there, but were permitted to do no more than gnash with their teeth." Sunday, May 10, (1767) 1 Cor. ix, 24, '*So run that ye may obtain.*' For Newmarket races—many people there. I was a little confused, but I heard it was blessed—what cannot God do?"

Not only were all the energies of Mr. Rowland Hill's own mind at this period directed to the object of preaching Christ, but he had been the means also of communicating to some of his fellow students, and others a portion of his ardent zeal. They had formed a little society, of which he was the leader; and he urged them on in pursuit of the one end they had in view, through every possible barrier that was cast before them. He was assailed on all sides. His father and mother were decidedly opposed to his career, and his superiors in the university condemned, in the strongest terms, his infringements of discipline. Hints of a refusal of testimonials, and even degree, were held out as the probable result of his irregularities, but in vain. To preach Christ he was resolved; and it was not his natural disposition to yield to any intimidating menaces, nor could he see, that, by his present departure from the regulations of the university, he was throwing any obstacle in the way of his future usefulness. The stigmas and censures cast on him he considered as honours of the highest order; and expulsion, or refusal of any university privilege, would only have driven him at once to other scenes of labour, and not to desponding silence and obscure repose. Besides the inclination of his own zealous and fervent disposition, he was under the influence of a master spirit of no ordinary mould: he was encouraged in his course,

whenever difficulties appeared before him, by the stirring letters of Whitefield, of which the following is an example.

*Haverfordwest, June 4, 1767.*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

I wish you joy of the late high dignity conferred upon you—higher than if you were made the greatest professor in the university of Cambridge. The honourable degrees you intend giving to your promising candidates, I trust will excite an holy ambition, and an holy emulation—let me know who is first honoured.<sup>3</sup> As I have been admitted to the degree of doctor for near these thirty years, I assure you I like my field preferment, my airy pluralities, exceeding well. For these three weeks last past I have been beating up for fresh recruits<sup>4</sup> in Gloucestershire and South Wales. Thousands and thousands attended, and good Lady Huntingdon was present at one of our reviews—her ladyship's aid-de-camp preached in Brecknock street, and captain Scott, that glorious field officer, lately fixed up his standard upon dear Mr. Fletcher's horseblock, at Madeley. Being invited thither, I have a great inclination to lift up the Redeemer's ensign next week, in the same place—with

<sup>3</sup> By preaching in any of the various places which Mr. Rowland Hill visited for that purpose.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Whitefield however, had so often been deceived by his "recruits," that he had become very cautious as to receiving them; and without either something striking in their replies to his questions, or in their appearance, or a strong recommendation, they were not easily received by him. His friend Cornelius Winter tells us that he dismissed a tailor with, "go to rag fair and buy old clothes"—nor did he readily take any person into his confidence. The late celebrated Robert Hall was often obliged to act in the same way, and once said to a shoemaker, who would fain have become a minister by his influence, and urged on him as an argument, that he ought not to keep his talents concealed in a napkin—"the smallest pocket handkerchief you have will do Sir." I recollect telling this story to Mr. Rowland Hill, who laughed heartily, and replied, "I remember when—— came to me, and talked about not hiding his talents, I could not help telling him, that for my part, I thought the closer he hid them the better."

what success you and your dearly beloved candidates for good old methodistical contempt shall know hereafter. God willing, I intend fighting my way up to town. Soon after my arrival thither, I hope thousands and thousands of vollies of prayers, energetic, effectual, fervent, heaven-besieging, heaven-opening, heaven-taking prayers, shall be poured forth for you all. Oh, my dearly beloved and longed for in the Lord, my bowels yearn towards you. Fear not to go without the camp—keep open the correspondence between the two universities. Remember the praying legions—they were never known to yield—God bless those that are gone to their respective *cures*. I say not *livings*—a term of too modern date—Christ is our life—Christ is the Levite's inheritance, and Christ will be the true disinterested Levite's lot and portion and all. Greet your dear young companions whom I saw—they are welcome to write when they please. God be your physician under your bodily malady! A thorn—a thorn—but Christ's grace will be sufficient for you. To his tender never failing mercy, I commit you as being for his great blessed name's sake, my dear professor.

Yours, &c. &c.

G. W.

P.S. I am sorry it hath so turned out about the letter—but you shall have it when I reach London.

To Mr. Rowland Hill,

at St. John's College, Cambridge.

On the Sunday after this letter was written, he preached at the castle at Cambridge, but describes himself as rather confused, a feeling which probably arose from his bodily ailment. On the Tuesday following he spoke at Chesterton, on the gospel be-

ing revealed to babes, "with some power and to many people," adding this prayer, "Lord bless it, then shall I know that I do thy will." He seems, at this early period of his ministerial labours, to have been always much cast down by a small attendance, a discouragement he seldom experienced either then or in his maturer life, but which, whenever it did happen, seemed to deprive him of all energy. He remarks in the entry immediately following the one last quoted—"a poor poor congregation: Lord, what are we come to? Lord, help"—this was at the castle, where he preached the following Sunday, on receiving the adoption of sons, to "many people, but not much affected." This appears to have been his last opportunity but two of speaking at the castle; for, after mentioning two other texts on which he had preached there, he describes the door to the prisoners as shut against him.

Just at this time he received a visit in college from two pious natives of Denmark, who had been with his brother Richard at Hawkstone, and who brought a letter of introduction from Mr. Whitefield. A portion of their diary, during their stay in England, contains an account of this interview, and is written with great piety and simplicity, as will be seen from the following interesting extract.<sup>5</sup> "The 16th of June, (1767) we arrived at Cambridge—in the Crown Inn, at Mr. Cowling. The 17th we went to Mr. Rowland Hill of John's college, showing our letter of introduction from Mr. Whitefield. We spent almost the whole day with him in his edifying company—he told us much blessed news of the kingdom of our

<sup>5</sup> I give this extract exactly as it is found in the paper containing it, which was preserved by Mr. Rowland Hill.

dear Saviour, viz. that there were at Cambridge seven awakened and Jesus-loving students, one little girl from ten, one boy from thirteen years, and several married and unmarried people. His bible and prayer were his only study, &c.<sup>6</sup>—and, after our friend having prayed very fervently with us, we departed from Cambridge the 18th of June, for Newmarket. Afterwards we came again the 25th of ditto, to Cambridge, where we spent a blissful evening with our dear Mr. Hill. The 26th June he conducted us to a pious friend, Mr. Matthew, at Grandchester, where we met with the revered Mr. Berridge, at Everton, and in the evening setted off for Nottingham. The 3rd of July we arrived in the Angel Inn, at Mr. Kamp, in Oxford, and to our joy found there our dear Mr. Rowland Hill, from Cambridge, who brought us to Mr. Jones of Edmund Hall, where we met with nine pious students, amongst whom were

Mr. Hallward of Worcester

Foster of Queen's

Pew of Hertford

Gurden of Magdalen

Clark of St. John's

Kay and Grove of Edmund Hall's College,<sup>7</sup>

Spending the following day with these dear brethren, and left Oxford the 5th of July."

At the beginning of this month, Mr. Rowland Hill left the university for the long vacation, and was on his way home, when he met these pious foreigners at Oxford; but before his departure, he preached with reference to his intended absence, on two occasions, to which he thus alludes—"Lord's day at Painter's, on

<sup>6</sup> As will be soon seen Mr. Rowland Hill did not neglect his college studies, and no man set a more proper estimate on the value of learning.

<sup>7</sup> Two of the expelled in 1768.

last chapter of 2 Cor., *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*—my parting sermon, I was but dead.” “Monday, June 30, at Chesterton, to many people, with much comfort, on John vi, 68, *Lord whither shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?* Many tears—a dismal parting.”

When he wrote these last words his mind must have been deeply affected both by the sympathies of those he was leaving at Cambridge, as well as by the prospects which awaited him at home, which was about to be to him a mingled scene of cloud and sunshine. The latter he enjoyed in the cordial welcome of his sister, and elder brother, who had lately become a village preacher, and a visiter of prisons like himself; but the displeasure of his parents cast a gloom over his soul; and he used often to speak of his sorrowful walks amidst the beautiful scenery of his father's grounds, and of the frowns which pierced to the very core of his tender and affectionate heart. But he was encouraged in his own career, and congratulated on his brother's activity, by his “much honoured Mr. Whitefield,” who addressed him in his peculiar and energetic style of expression.

*London, July 14, 1767.*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

WHAT said our Lord to Martha? Did I not say unto thee, if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God? Blessed, for ever blessed, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for what he hath done for your dear brother. A preaching, prison-preaching, field-preaching, Esq. strikes more than all black gowns and lawn sleeves in the world. And, if I am not mistaken, the great Shep-



herd and Bishop of souls will let the world, and his own children too, know that he will not be prescribed to, in respect to men, or garbs, or places, much less will he be confined to any order, or set of men under heaven. I wish you both much, very much, prosperity. You will have it, you will have it—this is the way, walk in it. Both tabernacle and chapel pulpits shall be open to a captain or an esquire sent of God. The good news from Oxford is encouraging. Say what they will, preaching should be one part of the education of a student in divinity—*Usus promptos facit*. Dear Pentycross and the friends you introduced with one Mr. Atkinson were with me three hours on Saturday last. I hope it was not lost time. Write often and let me know how you go on. What says your friend, dear Mr. Powis. God bless him and help him to go forwards—dear Esq. Hill—I pray for you night and day. Miss Gode is gone off triumphantly, and also another of Brighthelmstone flock—Hallelujah—come, Lord, come.

Ever yours, &c.

G. W.

When at home, Mr. Rowland Hill preached wherever he could collect a congregation. His first entry in his memoranda written at the time, is—"Wednesday, July 7—*beginning at Jerusalem*—Lower Heath, (a part of his father's estate) to many people. I had some power given me, but I thought they were very unaffected." Again; "Saturday, at Marchamly, (a village near Hawkstone) from Matt. xviii, 3, *Except ye be converted*, &c. Much straitened on account of bashfulness in speaking before my dear brother." During his whole visit to his family, he never lost an oppor-



tunity of proclaiming his Saviour, but deeply lamented that he could so seldom find one. He had, however, the joy of seeing his brother Brian added to those of his own kindred who were already his fellow-believers in Christ Jesus, on which he was congratulated by Mr. Whitefield in terms too characteristic of that extraordinary man not to be inserted here.

*London, August 8, 1767.*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

I HAVE been sadly hindered from answering your last letter delivered me by your brother. I gave it him to read, and we had, I trust, a profitable conference. God be praised if another of your brothers is gained. What grace is this! Four or five out of one family—it is scarcely to be paralleled. Who knows but the root as well as the branches may be taken by and by: Abba, Father, all things are possible with thee. Steadiness and perseverance in the children, will be one of the best means, under God, of convincing the parents. Their present opposition I think cannot last very long; if it does, to obey God rather than man, when forbidden to do what is undoubted duty, is the invariable rule. Our dear Penty is under the cross at Cambridge. But, *crescit sub pondere*—

Satan thwarts and men object;  
Yet the thing they thwart, effect.

I should be glad if any one's exhibition<sup>8</sup> was taken from him for visiting the sick, &c. It would vastly tend to the furtherance of the gospel; but Satan sees

<sup>8</sup> A college friend, to whom Mr. Rowland Hill was much attached, having been the means of his conversion, wrote him word that he had been threatened in this way. He says, "the sum of their determination concerning me may be comprised in these few words—that I immediately return to college, and that unless they receive a letter of my recanting my present principles, which they (who know not

too far, I imagine, to play such a game now. Let him do his work—he is only a mastiff chained. Continue to inform me how he barks, and how far he is permitted to go in your parts; and God's people shall be more and more stirred up to pray for you all, by my dear professor,

Yours, &c. &c.

In our all-conquering Emmanuel,  
To Mr. Rowland Hill, G. W.  
at Hawkstone, Shropshire.

Mr. Rowland Hill's acute sensibility to the opposition of his parents, and the hindrances which were cast in the way of his exertions, seem very much to have weakened the spring of his elastic mind. This is evident from the language of his diary—"Saturday, Sept. 5, (1767) at Marchamly, on Gal. ii, 20, 21, on living by faith in Christ. The three last times I have spoken, I have found but little comfort, occasioned by my speaking so seldom. God forbid that the little hair on my head may not all be shorn off." On almost every succeeding occasion too, at this period, his remark is, "but little comfort." On Tuesday, October 12th, just before his return to Cambridge, he thus registers his farewell: "At Marchamly, Heb. ii, 30, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.* The last time—the people are very dead. Was enabled to say many sharp things to rouse them. What I have spoke I have spoke faithfully through grace assisting. O that I had spoke oftener.

what they say, nor whereof they affirm) declare are contrary to the doctrines of the christian church, I am to have no further benefit from them, and my exhibition of thirty pounds per year to be withdrawn. Oh! that I had thirty thousand to give up for Jesu's sake." He adds, "I have been with Mr. Romaine frequently of late, blessed be God for it."

Lord, put thy seal to thine own word, and pardon what was mine." On the twenty-first of the same month he took his departure for the university, having first commended to God in prayer those of whom he was now about to take leave. This is noticed in a letter of his sister to her friend Lady Glenorchy, dated Oct. 20, 1767, in which she says—"We have just had a parting prayer with my dear brother Rowland, who leaves us to-morrow. He proposes to see good Lady Huntingdon in his way to Cambridge, which I trust will be blessed to him, and that he will ever stand faithful in the cause of his crucified Master, whether he be admitted as a minister of the Gospel, to preach in his name or not; but alas! my dear friend, to such a deplorable apostacy is the world come, that young men who are steadfastly attached to the church, and live exemplary lives, can hardly get their testimonials signed for orders." On his way to Cambridge, Mr. Rowland Hill preached at a Mrs Layton's of Bath, Saturday, Oct. 24th, but was, as he says, "rather dashed at the audience—Lord for boldness—a little assistance from above." This he repeated with "not much comfort or perspicuity." He observes "I do not love to speak to fine people." He preached, however, in Lady Huntingdon's chapel, and expounded in her house "with much comfort."

The instant he arrived at Cambridge, he began preaching; and he thus describes his first meeting of his friends and followers there—"the people were much in tears at seeing me. Lord keep them and me. A little comfort. Always find more comfort in speaking to my own people than any where else." His feelings, during this term at college, seem to have varied exceedingly. On one occasion, a Sunday, he

writes—"much comfort and stirring—*laudate Deum.*" On another, the following Wednesday—"distressed at the smallness of the congregation, so that I had not any liberty. Lord, where is the word that was sown on Sunday eve! *Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days.*" Of a subsequent sermon he says, "I doubt too much in my own spirit;" and he closes the year 1767, and commences the following with this prayer, "Lord grant us a deal of blessed preaching this next year." He prayed also, in a truly Christian spirit, for grace to act with forbearance towards the gowmsmen who ridiculed him; and remarks, in reference to the presence of some of them when he was addressing the people, "the Lord would not let me trim, blessed be his name."

Not only was Mr. Rowland Hill actively engaged at this time with the flock he had collected at Cambridge, but he kept up a constant correspondence with those undergraduates and others at Oxford, who professed sentiments in unison with his, and who were employed in somewhat similar scenes of religious exercise. His principal correspondent was his friend Mr. Hallward, of Worcester college, who informs him of the great stir their proceedings were making in the university, and of the outcry raised both by "gown and town." Little, however, did he anticipate that the opposition made to these young men would end, as it did, on March 11, 1768, in the expulsion of six students from St. Edmund's Hall. In the previous autumn, Mr. Hallward informs him of meetings which took place in the house of a Mrs. Durbridge, the widow of a humble, but eminently pious friend of Mr. Whitefield, of whose triumphant death Mr. Rowland Hill had some time before received an animating ac-

count from the pen of his friend Hallward, who reports him to have said, when the languor of disease prevented his holding much intercourse with those who visited him, "the still voice of Jesus to my soul is sweeter than any other conversation whatever." It was in this house that their assemblies for prayer and exhortation were chiefly carried on, till at length discovery was made of their meetings, from which, when known, they "thought it cowardly to desist," though they heard "of loss of character, degrees, orders, and even expulsion itself." Mr. Rowland Hill's correspondent assures him, that they were unmoved by these things, and that for his own part, he was his pupil, and could declare, with sincerity, that he considered it "a happiness and privilege to be counted worthy to suffer reproach for Jesu's sake with the little flock" in Oxford, where he says in another letter, "the lion has roared, though I think he has had but little real cause hitherto. God grant he may for the future have more."

At length the storm which had been long gathering, and gave a few warnings of its future violence, poured the full torrent of its vengeance upon six students of St. Edmund's Hall. Their names were, Benjamin Kay, James Matthews, Thomas Jones, Thomas Grove, Erasmus Middleton, Joseph Shipman, who on the complaint of Mr. Higson their tutor, and contrary to the inclination of Dr. Dixon, the principal of the college, were summoned before the vice-chancellor and his assessors for preaching and expounding doctrines contrary to those of the church of England, and frequenting illicit conventicles. The result of this inquiry was, as has been before stated, their expulsion—an act which was soon

followed by a letter addressed to Dr. Durell, the vice-chancellor, from Mr. Whitefield, and by a pamphlet entitled *Pietas Oxoniensis* from the pen of Mr. Richard Hill, dedicated to the Earl of Lichfield, then chancellor of the university of Oxford. This pamphlet was answered by Dr. Nowell, principal of St. Mary's Hall, and public orator, who gives the articles of accusation, and his own notes of the evidence, and maintains that Mr. Higson deserved the thanks given him by the vice-chancellor, and that the sentence of expulsion was just. On the thanks to Mr. Higson, Whitefield remarks,

“ Pudet hæc opprobria nobis  
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.

What thanks, reverend Sir, he may meet with from the whole university I know not; but one thing I know, namely, that he will receive no thanks for that day's work from the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly of the first-born which are written in heaven, or from God the judge of all, in that day when Jesus the mediator of the new covenant shall come in his own glory, in the glory of the father, and his holy angels, and gather his elect from all the four corners of the world.”—Mr. Higson it seems was subject to insanity, and had been under restrictions, and therefore when he went to Dr. Dixon with the charge—“ that there were several enthusiasts in their society who talked of regeneration, inspiration, and drawing nigh unto God,” he treated it as the effect of excitement in a disordered mind, especially as the young men in question had lived most exemplary lives, and had conducted themselves in an orderly manner in the college. The tutor, however, dissatisfied with the disposition of the head

of the college towards the young men, applied to the vice-chancellor as visitor, who appointed certain assessors and a day for hearing the accusations against them, and they were cited to this court by a notice on the door of the hall chapel. It appears that Dr. Dixon, the principal of the hall, defended their doctrines from the articles of the established church, and praised, in the highest terms, the exemplariness of their lives; and others considered, that if by a well meant zeal they had fallen into any imprudencies, an admonition was the most their conduct required. The charges against them were certainly a most singular medley. Some of them were accused of being of low origin, others of being illiterate, of being reputed methodists, and of being connected with Messrs. Venn, Newton, and Fletcher, clergymen of the same principles; and it was insinuated that they only came to Oxford for the purpose of "sculking into orders." Part of the testimony produced on the occasion, was a letter to the tutor, by a gentleman, assuring him that Thomas Jones had made a very good periwig for him only two years before, when employed in the trade of a barber; and hence it was argued, that he could not be a fit person to continue, especially after his irregularity in praying and expounding the scriptures, in a seat of learning like Oxford. It was moreover considered a happy circumstance that the views of the methodistical leaders of the day of "filling the church with their votaries had, by this seasonable interposition, been disappointed." These last words are those of Dr. Nowell in his reply to the pamphlet entitled *Pietas Oxoniensis*, and which was soon followed by an answer from the pen of its author Mr. Richard Hill, called "Goliath slain, being



a reply to the Rev. Dr. Nowell's answer to *Pietas Oxoniensis*, wherein the false glosses of that gentleman's pamphlet are removed, his great misrepresentation detected, the ancient doctrines of the reformation and of the church of England defended, and the sentence against the expelled young men proved, from his own words, to be far more severe, arbitrary, and illegal than it hath hitherto been represented." The intimate connection of his brother Rowland with these zealous young men was, in a great measure the reason of the very prominent part taken by Mr. Richard Hill in this controversy, which was carried on for some time with great vehemence in various letters, in the "Shaver's sermon" so called, and in the newspapers of the day. There can be no question that their preaching and expounding while in *statu pupillari*, was an infringement, by these young men, of the *letter* of the university statutes; but it was shrewdly observed by one of the heads of houses present on their trial, "that as these six gentlemen were expelled for having too much religion, it would be very proper to inquire into the conduct of some who had too little," and whose pursuits, if visited according to the same regulations, would have subjected them to a similar infliction. But the doctrines they promulgated formed the chief subject of their judges' displeasure; and the zealous clergymen, Venn, Newton, Fletcher, and others, whom they followed, were at that time accused of holding tenets opposed to those of the church to which they belonged. Time, however, has done justice to their piety and merits,<sup>9</sup> and the church of England is daily adding to the number of her zealous and

<sup>9</sup> Of Fletcher, Southey, whom no body will suspect of lack of affection for the church, says—"no age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety, or more perfect charity; no church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister."



active ministers, men who consider their doctrines not at variance with her liturgy and articles, and who, without any infringement of her rules, are preaching salvation *through faith alone* in a crucified Redeemer, and whose *works* are an answer to those who insinuate that they lay no stress on them as evidences of their belief.

The subject of the expulsion of these young men from Oxford has been alluded to here on account of the very intimate connection which subsisted between Mr. Rowland Hill and the little company of which they were a part, who entered into his views, and who followed his example at that university; and because of the perseverance and determination with which the late Sir Richard Hill defended their principles. As may be imagined, this event deeply affected Mr. Rowland Hill; and although his Alma Mater proceeded not to such lengths of severity, he was not without his share of difficulties and opposition. There were also those of the same religious sentiments as his own, who considered his irregular course as not the best preparative for his degree or future ministry. He never did, however, from the first impulse he received, nor would his nature permit it, move in any defined and settled orbit. He was encouraged in his proceedings by the advice of many of his friends, who told him they were "glad to hear the kingdom of Christ grew so formidable at Cambridge as to make the adversary think it worth while to oppose." He had, in a most extraordinary degree, the power of attracting and retaining the regard of those whose minds were at all disposed to religion; an instance of which appears in the following extract from one of their letters:—"My dear Rowly, may the Lord

prosper you in every thing you undertake. Although I know you so little personally, I find my heart more drawn out to you than almost to any one I know." It is evident from the correspondence of his early associates, that there never was a leader more zealously followed or more cordially beloved than Mr. Rowland Hill during his residence at Cambridge. Religion never could be accused of gloom as respected him at any period of his life; and when at school and at college, he was exceeded by no person, but his brother Robert, in every species of athletic exercise. He was an exceedingly bold and intrepid rider, and in the exercises of skating and swimming, he has probably never been much excelled by any person. He once swam from Cambridge to Grandchester, a distance of two miles against the stream; and it is not many years ago since a person who walked by the side of the river at the time, reminded him of the fact.

During the year 1768 Mr. Rowland Hill was diligent in his studies preparatory to his degree of B.A., to which he proceeded a twelvemonth later from his first going to college than is usual, having, to use the technical language of the university, *degraded*, or postponed his examination for a year. His tutor, Pearce, of St. John's, was a person of much learning and eminence, having been in the year 1767 third wrangler and second medalist. He was afterwards public orator, master of Jesus college, master of the temple, and dean of Ely. Mr. Pearce was not much older than his pupil. They had occasional communications in after life, and entertained for each other a sincere mutual esteem; and it is this connection which accounts for Mr. Rowland

Hill's having been frequently permitted to preach in the Temple church, before the order of the bishop of London for his exclusion from the pulpits in his diocese. Considering the activity with which he kept up his communications with his religious friends and followers at Cambridge, and in its neighbourhood, it is extraordinary that he could find time for any serious application for his approaching examination; but he was naturally fond of certain subjects of mathematical science, particularly optics, hydrostatics, mechanics, and astronomy, of the principles of which he acquired, with the able assistance of his tutor, a fair general knowledge, and the popular parts of them frequently engaged his attention, and seemed greatly to interest him during his whole life. He was by no means unmoved by the charms of rational enjoyments; but the object to which his whole soul was attracted was "the one thing needful," to which his attention, if at any time diverted from it, was always prepared in an instant to return.

In January, 1769, Mr. Rowland Hill proceeded to his degree of B.A., when his name appeared in the list of honours, an unusual thing for a fellow commoner in those days, though latterly the members of some of the most distinguished families in the kingdom have passed with the highest success, through a course of study requiring no common industry and talent, and of the extent and difficulties of which those who lived in the last century had not the remotest idea.

Before he took his degree, several of his college friends had been ordained and had settled in various cures, and maintained with him a regular correspondence, in which they informed him of their religious experience and ministerial difficulties and successes.

They had different views of the best mode of effecting their important object : some disapproved all irregularity ; while others thought it essential to their usefulness. One of them in a letter to Mr. Rowland Hill, giving an account of his labours in the neighbourhood of his parish where the duty was great, says—" you need not, I think, mention any thing to Simpson of what I design by the will of God to do in the ministry, either now or afterwards. I dare not give him any pain ; and though we think differently about the methods of advancing the kingdom of Christ, yet I am sure his eye is more single than mine, and what I very often take in myself to be a burning zeal is nothing but constitution. Mr. Berridge's plan I wish to follow the most of any method I have heard of, for he is a stated minister, and is actually himself at the head of what he calls his 'shops,' so that he does not just preach and never see their faces, but is joined in society with them all." Mr. Berridge had great influence over Mr. Rowland Hill and his pious associates who followed the example of his itinerancy ; and whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the expediency of their mode of proceeding, there can be no doubt that they were actuated by the purest and most truly christian desire to sow as widely as possible the seeds of eternal truth in the uncultivated soil around them. When Mr. Berridge first entered on the duties of his ministry, and for some time after he was presented to the living of Everton by his college, he was prejudiced against both Wesley and Whitefield ; but his sentiments having changed, and his zeal having become the topic of conversation in the religious circles of the day, a correspondence commenced between them, which was speedily succeeded

by a confirmed intimacy. He afterwards separated from Wesley, when the union between him and Whitefield was dissolved. Mr. Berridge's first interview with John Wesley took place on the second of June, 1758, and on the twenty-second of the same month he began to itinerate, preaching in farm yards, in fields, and wherever he could collect a congregation. The counties of Cambridge, Essex, Hertford, Bedford, and Huntingdon, were the principal scenes of his labours, and in this circuit he preached, upon an average, from ten to twelve sermons a week, and not unfrequently rode on horseback a hundred miles. He rented houses and barns, maintained lay preachers, and travelled at his own expense—charges which his fortune, inherited from his father, and his income from his preferment, enabled him to bear. Mr. Hicks, a clergyman in his neighbourhood, who had been converted by a sermon he heard from him, was his chief companion ; and it has been computed, that the result of their preaching in one year, was the awakening of a sense of religion in about four thousand souls. The most violent opposition was raised against him, which seemed only to stir up his strength and enkindle new zeal in his soul ; nor did he regard all the opprobrious names with which he was assailed by his enemies for more than twenty years. Thus in the early culture of certain portions of that soil, which is now under a more orderly tillage, and exhibits symptoms of an abundant harvest, God permitted the seed sown by the first spiritual husbandmen, to be irregularly scattered on its surface ; and it could only be a sincere desire to make it fruitful, that stimulated the labours of these undoubtedly pious and indefatigable men.

One of the lay preachers countenanced by Mr. Berridge, was a man well known at Cambridge by the familiar appellation of Johny Stittle, an eccentric, uneducated, but naturally gifted man, perfectly devoid of the fear of any human being, and of a spotless private reputation. Mr. Berridge thus notices him in a letter to Mr. Rowland Hill: "John Stittle preached at my house in the holidays; he is a wonderful man indeed; somewhat lifted up at the present, I think; but his Master will take him by the nose by and by." During the whole of Mr. Rowland Hill's residence at college, he was in constant communication with Mr. Berridge and his friends, who urged him to persevere in his irregular administrations. He had, whilst an undergraduate, diligently taken care of what he called "his little flock at Cambridge;" and his labours there, as well as in numerous other places, had involved him in a series of troubles which would have damped all the energies of a less zealous and enterprising spirit. The numbers, however, who were awakened to an interest in their souls by his exertions, the sincere and devoted attachment of his friends, the great work of grace in his own family, and the consciousness of sincerity, were his consolations, and prepared him to pass with fortitude through the difficulties which lay in the course which he had determined to pursue; which was, to hold communion "with men of *all sorts*, provided they were of the *right sort*;" and to cast the gospel net whenever an opportunity presented itself, looking to the church for orders and a standard of doctrine.

## CHAPTER II.

*Mr. Rowland Hill refused orders by six bishops.*

WHEN Mr. Rowland Hill proceeded to his first degree, he was more than twenty-three years of age ; and he therefore immediately exerted himself to the utmost to obtain orders. His irregularities while at Cambridge, and his disinclination to promise to confine himself in future to the rules of the church, caused him to experience the mortification of refusals of ordination from no less than six bishops. Still, such was the impression on his mind that it was his duty to preach the Gospel, that he could hardly be persuaded to retire amongst his friends for a short period previous to each successive application for admission into the church. The world around him was in gross darkness, and he longed to impart to it a few rays of heavenly light : he saw sin every where powerful, and his soul was stirred up to combat the enemy of man's salvation. Had he lived in these days of more widely extended truth, he would probably have waited in patience and in prayer. He could not, however, endure the thought of leaving his followers at Cambridge ; and he went frequently to the university for the purpose of continuing his adminis-



trations among them, a circumstance which threw a serious obstacle in the way of his being episcopally ordained. He had also an impression on his mind that his life would be very short, and he earnestly desired to spend the brief existence he conceived to be allotted to him here, in the active service of God. His college friends, now ordained and occupying stations in the church, sympathized with him most feelingly on his disappointment. One of them, the Rev. E. Buckley, of Kippax, near Ferrybridge, Yorkshire, adds to his expressions of condolence, an invitation to his house in the following urgent terms:—"My dear friend, I had the favour of yours, and know not whether to say I am sorry or not for the refusal you have lately met with, since I doubt not it is the will of a good and gracious God that it should be so. It would be conferring an honour and pleasure upon me, if you would make my house your home, and the sooner you come, the greater will be the obligation. Let the next post inform me that you are on your journey northwards; perhaps the bishop of York, who is one of the most candid men in the world, will do for you what the bishop of Lichfield has refused; we probably can muster up some friends for you here, who will stir and interest themselves more in your behalf than any of your own relations." Another of them writes—"When I think of your present situation from your late disappointment, forgive me if I have now and then some fears of your zeal becoming damped, and your love for souls waxing cold. Oh! that my fears may be without foundation. Indeed, my dear Rowly, we had need be praying night and day that the Lord would be pleased to make us the happy, though unworthy, instruments of reviving his



work." This last sentence declares the great object of the zeal of these devoted young men; and whatever differences of opinion Christians may have of their mode of endeavouring to promote a revival of religion, there can be only one of the integrity of their intentions.

The death of Mr. Whitefield had deprived Mr. Rowland Hill of the guide by whom he had been directed in his former difficulties. Mr. Berridge, now his chief adviser, recommended him "to stand still and not to hurry." "When the cloud," he says in a very long letter, dated Jan. 19, 1770, "seems to move towards any place, prepare to follow it, but pray still to be kept from the delusions of your own spirit, and from the wrong counsel of others." "Be not," he adds, "anxious about orders; they will come as soon as wanted; nor be anxious about any thing but to know the Lord's will, and to do the Lord's work. One of your Master's titles is Counsellor, and a wonderful counsellor he is. Therefore ask no counsel, and take no counsel but of the Lord; so shall you walk more evenly than if you had the whole congregation of gospel divines at your elbow every moment to advise you. Your late successful expedition seems a providential prelude for a field preacher next summer; and if Yorkshire is to be the field of action, Wales must lay<sup>1</sup> out of your way.

The winter of 1769-70, Mr. Rowland Hill passed comfortably in his father's house at Hawkstone, and if the bishop of Lichfield would have ordained him, he might have had a title for orders in the adjacent village of Weston; but the preaching expedition alluded to by Mr. Berridge, and his former course, de-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Berridge had a whimsical objection to the word *lie*, except in its bad sense.

cided the bishop to refuse his application. Hitherto his brother Richard had been an active lay preacher ; but he was prevailed on to relinquish that work, and seek other modes of usefulness derivable from his fortune and station. Mr. Richard Hill's giving up preaching was a great grievance to Mr. Berridge, who thus alludes to it when writing in his quaint and peculiar style to his brother Rowland : " As Paul was, so be thou a fool for Christ's sake ; yea, the very scum and off-scouring of all things. I believe the Lord Jesus, who has a peculiar love for your family, intended this honour for your elder brother, but through bad advice he has declined it : and the Lord now seems to be conferring this honour upon you, which will make the younger brother prove at length the better gentleman. I am glad you find a peaceful refuge for the present, and good winter quarters at Hawkstone ; but if the Lord makes you take the field in the spring, and gives success, you may expect friends and foes will fasten on you like leeches ; and needfully fasten to draw out the hot and bad blood which a successful expedition will occasion."

In all his deviations from the course prescribed by the church of England, Mr. Rowland Hill continued unalterably attached to her articles and liturgy, and was never, like some of his early friends, troubled with conscientious scruples as to subscribing to them. No person ever exceeded him in his admiration of the spirituality and beauty of the book of Common Prayer ; he used also to speak very highly of the homilies ; he once remarked, in allusion to the objects of the Prayer Book and Homily Society, that they could distribute few books more likely to be useful, than a judicious selection from those "good

sound old-fashioned sermons." It was impossible not to be struck with his devout attention, in his own chapel, to the reading of the prayers; and he often expressed the strongest disapprobation of the apparent disregard shewn to them by those who came in after service was begun. He always considered the want of a vivid perception of the excellence of the liturgy as an evidence of a lack of spirituality; and in conversation would frequently repeat parts of it with great energy, and say, "well done the good old reformers; what fine scriptural ideas they had; if they were alive now, I would try to get them into Surry chapel pulpit."

This was not the case with his friend Pentycross; he had many scruples about the book of Common Prayer, which Mr. Berridge endeavoured to remove. He notices it in a letter to Mr. Rowland Hill, in which he says—"Poor Penty, I fear, will not take a degree, or not take it honestly. He came to my house about three weeks ago, and brought two pockets full of doubts and scruples relating to the articles and liturgy. I would fain have had the scruples left at Everton, but he took them all back with him to college, and seemed determined not to part with them. However, from the precipitate step he formerly took in signing a college paper, I apprehend it possible he may take a flying leap into a degree still. There is something very amiable in dear Penty. I believe the Lord loves him, and designs him for great things. Perhaps he may be intended for a spiritual comet, a field preacher like yourself: this seems to be his great aim and ambition. If he cannot subscribe to the church articles, he does not mean to settle among the dissenters; he want to raise a flock of his own, and I hope the Lord

will give him one. When he left me he talked of going to the Welsh college.<sup>2</sup> May the Lord direct him."

If ever there existed a set of Christians who differed without dissension, it was that to which Mr. Rowland Hill belonged at Cambridge. Their leader, Mr. Berridge, spent his ample fortune in the service of religion, and in the employment of persons as preachers, into the *essentials* of whose characters and opinions he alone enquired. His resources were so exhausted in his old age, that his friend Mr. Romaine is found begging on his behalf, "for the support of two preachers and their horses, and several local preachers, and for the rents of several barns in which they preach." Into whatever streams the current of his life diverged, they were all tributary to the cause of his Redeemer.

In the spring of 1770 Mr. Rowland Hill's active spirit brought him out into exertion from the retirement of his father's house. This involved him in trials and difficulties such as he had not before experienced. Besides his father's displeasure, and his disappointments in his endeavours to obtain orders, he met with violent opposition on many occasions, and was often pelted and abused by the assemblies he addressed. He was extremely desirous of accompanying his sister into Scotland, to visit lady Glenorchy, but was unable to accomplish the journey, and he afterwards acknowledged that it was a providential, though a severe disappointment. Going to Edinburgh he took up his abode in the house of his friend Mr. Buckley, and while there he received a long letter of advice and comfort from Mr. Berridge, who says—"I look

<sup>2</sup> Lady Huntingdon's, at Trevecca.

upon your present tryals as a happy omen of future service ; and if you continue waiting and praying, a door will open by and by. Be not solicitous about orders ; as soon as they are wanted they will drop into your lap. I would observe concerning your present situation, it may possibly grow more dark before it clears up. The darkest moment in the whole *nuc-themeron* is just before break of day." He then adds, —give my dear love to Mr. Buckley ; he must be an honest and bold man for Jesus if he can welcome you. What a mercy it is there are some left who are not afraid of the cross, nor ashamed to receive a stigmatized pilgrim."

Mr. Rowland Hill generally resided at Hawkstone in the winter, but visited, in his preaching expeditions at other seasons of the year, an immense number of places ; and though he suffered greatly from innumerable trials, and every species of opposition, he had the consolation of abundant success. In the autumn of 1770, while with Mr. Buckley, he was the instrument of many conversions in Yorkshire, particularly at Leeds. Of this he was apprized in a letter from a Mr. Iveson of that place, who says, "indeed, dear Sir, many souls here remember with joy and gratitude the happy times they enjoyed under your ministry." The same person adds, "Mr. J. Wesley in a letter to Miss Hirrold expresses his approbation of your preaching amongst his people. From this I suppose you will be cordially received by all his preachers, as they are informed of his good will towards you." He also assures him that the Wesleyans, at Leeds, regarded him with the sincerest affection, and were much attached to his preaching.

In the spring of 1771, Mr. Rowland Hill commenc-

ed preaching at Bristol, and in the neighbourhood. He was introduced to the Tabernacle congregation there by Mr. Cornelius Winter, who bears testimony to the usefulness of his sermons, and considers having made his acquaintance as one of the greatest mercies of his life. "From the sabbath" he says "on which I had the pleasure to introduce him into the Tabernacle pulpit, has religion been reviving through his instrumentality, and the flame has burned strong ever since. Other instruments may have helped, but it began with him." He was at this time under the frowns of his family, disappointed of admission into the church, and distressed for money.

Sir Rowland Hill restricted his allowance to a very small sum, both in token of his displeasure at his itinerant life, and to prevent it. But he was determined to go forth though "without purse or scrip," and to pursue, in defiance of every human restraint, the course he conceived providence had marked out for him. Many of his most arduous journeys were made upon a little Welsh pony given him by a clergyman, and he often left the scene of an evening sermon the next morning, without knowing where he should find at night a resting place for himself and the faithful animal which carried him. He seldom however failed to meet with a kind reception from some person who loved him for his work's sake, though he was often reduced to great difficulties. On one evening in particular, as he used frequently to describe, when he landed on his return to Bristol, and had paid the passage across the Severn for himself and his pony, he had not sufficient left in his purse to procure a night's lodging, and went on, he knew not whither, hungry and exhausted. But he was not deserted, and



before night he found shelter and refreshment, as well as the means of proceeding on his journey. Impelled by the irresistible conviction that he was following the commands of God, he pursued his one great object undaunted by every earthly obstacle. No one could feel more acutely the displeasure of his parents, over which he often wept in the silent agony of his heart, nor did he ever once refuse compliance with their wishes but for the gospel's sake. He might have reposed amidst their smiles, in the lap of affluence, ease, and plenty; but he gave up every thing in the sincerest devotion to God, and received, as will be hereafter seen, the fulness of the promise even in this life to such as have willingly left all for the cause of the Redeemer.

In the year 1771, many parts of Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, and Wiltshire, were visited by Mr. Rowland Hill. He has himself recorded in his diary many of the texts from which he preached, and the effect of his sermons. He there describes the difficulties he had to contend against, and the success which followed his efforts to spread a knowledge of the truth. Extracts from this journal will convey the truest idea of the state of his mind and the results of his ministry.

“ May 5, 1771, morning at Chippenham, Mark vi, 47—a very dead time. Evening at the Devizes. The first gospel sermon<sup>3</sup> that ever was preached there, on Isaiah 1, 2, 3. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, I have nourished and brought up, &c. &c.* Supposed to be many thousands. A little disturbance, though we trust a great blessing. Many thanked me for my sermon and besought me to return. Before I began

<sup>3</sup> He must have meant the first in the recollection of persons then living.

preaching my heart was low, but afterwards was abundantly comforted at the goodness of the Lord. A spirit of praise and thanksgiving was upon all the people, and all agreed that the town was taken. Hallelujah."

In the midst of these labours he received the following letter of encouragement from the veteran in the same cause at Everton.

*Everton, May 8, 1771.*

DEAR ROWLY,

My heart sends you some of its kindest love, and breathes its tenderest wishes for you. I feel my heart go out to you whilst I am writing, and can embrace you as my second self. How soft and sweet are those silken cords which the dear Redeemer twines and ties about the hearts of his children! How different from mere natural affection, and much more from vicious self-love. Surely it is a pleasant thing to love with a pure heart fervently, and something of this love I feel for you, which brings a melting tear into my eye, and refreshes my very body as I write. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you. May heavenly truth beam into your soul, and heavenly love inflame your heart. I suppose you are now arrived in the West, and are working as a labourer in your master's vineyard. Be faithful and diligent, and look up to your master continually for direction and assistance. Remember his gracious promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." He will supply you with wisdom, strength, and courage: for he sends none upon a warfare at their own cost. I think your chief work for a season will be to break up fallow ground. This suits the accent of your voice at



present. God will give you other tongues when they are wanted; but now he sends you out to thrash the mountains, and a glorious thrashing it is. Go forth, my dear Rowly, wherever you are invited into the devil's territories; carry the Redeemer's standard along with you; and blow the gospel-trumpet boldly, fearing nothing but yourself. If you meet with success, as I trust you will, expect clamour, and threats from the world, and a little venom now and then from the children. These bitter herbs make good sauce for a young recruiting serjeant whose heart would be lifted up with pride, if it was not kept down by these pressures. The more success you meet with, the more opposition you will find: but Jesus sitteth above the water-floods and remaineth a king for ever. His eye is ever upon you, and his heavenly guards surround you. Therefore fear not; go on humbly, go on boldly, trusting only in Jesus, and all opposition shall fall before you. Make the scriptures your only study, and be much in prayer. The apostles gave themselves to the word of God and to prayer. Do thou likewise; labour to keep your mind in a heavenly frame; it will make your work pleasant, and your preaching and your conversation savoury. Now is your time to work for Jesus; you have health and youth on your side, and no church or wife on your back. The world is all before you, and providence your guide and guard. Go out therefore, and work whilst the day lasteth; and may the Lord Jesus water your own soul, and give ten thousand seals to your ministry. I am with great affection your J. B——e."

For R. Hill, Esquire, to be left with  
the right honourable the Countess of  
Huntingdon, at Bath, in Somersetshire.

On the day after the date of this letter, Mr. Rowland Hill proceeds in his diary—"May 9th, Bridgewater on Luke xix, 10—*The son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.* A large assembly of people, but very little comfort. Lord what an unprofitable servant. O that I might do better for the future."

"10th, at Stowey, to the most outrageous congregation I ever saw. There was such a noise with beating of pans, shovels, &c. blowing of horns and ringing of bells, that I could scarce hear myself speak. Though we were pelted with much dirt, eggs, &c. I was enabled to preach out my sermon."

"11th, at Putsham, to a serious and attentive congregation out of doors, on Heb. ii, 17, 18, on the compassionate unchangeable priesthood of Christ. Though I had not a deal of liberty, yet some I believe were comforted in their souls. Though the congregation stood serious, some scoffed at a distance, others threw stones. One man was slightly cut, and another almost stunned by a blow which cut him violently over the eye. We could get neither sight nor knowledge of our secret enemies in this affair: may the Lord forgive and convert them."

"Sunday 12th, a day much to be remembered. Commented in the morning to a few serious people at Putsham. Some unction attended while I explained to them part of the first psalm. After dinner, rode to Watchet, preached upon the prodigal son, *I will arise*, &c. Luke xv, 18, 19, out of doors with some freedom and power, to some hundreds, who behaved with the deepest attention. This town seems totally conquered; praise the Lord. From hence rode to Dunster, a market town, where was a congregation consisting

of near 2,000 hearers. Though the gospel had only been preached here four times before, yet through the goodness of the Lord in putting it into the heart of a magistrate to punish offenders, all opposition seems to be at an end. The people behaved with the most awful attention, while I was enabled to preach with much freedom on Is. xlviii, 22. *There is no peace for the wicked.* After having finished here about a quarter after seven, according to a very pressing invitation, after a little refreshment, I went with three hundred souls to Minehead, who came over to hear and invite the preaching to their town. A congregation which was supposed to consist of full 2,000 souls was presently collected. All but a very few of the upper sort of people behaved with remarkable attention, and seemed deeply struck at the majesty of the word, which came with power, having great liberty, and being enabled to pour forth my soul amongst them with much love while explaining to them Luke xiv, 21, *Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in, &c. &c.*"

" 13th, at Melsconb (Melksham), on 1st of Isaiah, 2, 3, *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, I have nourished, &c.* A miserable, dry, humbling time. A large number of people unaffected and inattentive; it was in a dissenting meeting house. I wanted humbling, the Lord make it useful, and take away my pride."

" 14th, at Stokegomar, on Jer. iii, 33, *In vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, &c. &c.* Here also I had rather a humbling time. Some were offended at my plainness, others, however, were blessed."

" Wednesday 15th, in the morning at 5 o'clock.

Explained to them the 23rd psalm with comfortable enlargement. *The Lord will not always be chiding*; O that I may learn humility for the future. In the evening at Bridgewater, on Job xlv, 4, *Behold I am vile*. With some liberty. The congregation was not so large, which I fear was occasioned by the deadness of my preaching the last time. I think this is the first time I ever preached to a decreasing congregation. Lord make me careful and prayerful."

"15th continued, and preached again at Bridgewater, with some though not so great freedom as the time before. By what I have seen in this western round, I believe that God is about to revive his work in the midst of us. Doors are opening every where, the hearing ear, and the understanding heart are given to many. I am more than ever convinced that itinerant preaching does a world of good, and that God blesses it continually. O for more life and diligence to do more for Christ."

Mr. Hill next returned to Bristol, and preached there twice on Sunday the 19th. He concludes his notice of these sermons by the remark—"a gracious gale through mercy attended all day. Who would not be a slave for Jesus Christ!" On the morning of the following day he preached at Kingswood, and, "in the evening" he says he "had the honour to commence viler than ever by renewing field preaching in Bristol, to some thousands, upon Acts iii, 19, *Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*. The word was with power, the people were deeply attentive, and a great blessing seemed visibly in the midst of us. I am fully satisfied as to field preaching. I know the Lord

puts honour upon it, and am sure that as soon as ever that custom dies, methodism will die with it."

While at Bristol he continued these labours daily; and in one sermon he says he "spoke much against the Arians," and that he had "a comfortable, profitable time." His text was Isa. liv, 5, *Thy Maker is thy husband*. He adds, "glory be to God for the smiles and refreshings we have had during these holy days. The Lord I trust has been abundantly with us in refreshing showers from above. Some few have been a little provoked; I cannot help it; I mean not to offend, but I must be faithful. The loving kindness of the Lord should teach me to be honest; he has abundantly given me the hearts of the people to counterbalance all opposition. Hallelujah."

He now proceeded to Bath, and addressed the society of Lady Huntingdon there; he also preached three sermons in the neighbourhood, the first of which he designates "a senseless unfeeling sermon to a senseless unaffected congregation;" from the second he derived more comfort, having been enabled to overawe an assembly disposed at first to riot, and who, after they had heard him, earnestly entreated him to come again; and from the third he expected a blessing, as some scoffers were drawn out into attention. The day after the last mentioned sermon, he returned to Bristol. His feelings in that city are thus described in his own words—"May 29th, on Luke v, 13, *I will, be thou clean*. A comfortable time for poor doubters at the Tabernacle. I have hitherto always found enlargement at Bristol, and I believe the Lord is with us for good."

In addition to his own labours, Mr. Rowland Hill began, while at Bristol, "early five o'clock preach-

ings," which were exceedingly well attended ; and he was followed by congregations of " many thousands" at Pool, and other places in the neighbourhood. He found " much comfort" from a visit to Worcester ; and on his return to Bristol, preached at Stroud, " in the streets, to a very large number of people, with some, though no great power, on the prodigal son, *I will arise, &c.* ; many people much offended at my plainness, but much blessed to others." On the evening of the same day he preached at Stroud, he addressed " some thousands in the wood" at Rodborough, which he repeated a few days after, and says, " the people were watered though I thought myself dry." The next place he mentions in Gloucestershire, was " Painswick, upon the common, in a waggon for my pulpit," and the following evening at Rodborough, in the Tabernacle, " because it was damp." On Sunday, June 16th, he preached at Dursley to immense crowds, and went, for the first time, on the evening of that day, to Wotton-underedge, a place that was destined to become his favourite summer residence in after life. His own account is—" Sunday eve. Wotton-underedge, a fresh place. The first sermon amongst them ; they behaved with remarkable attention, and stood in great crowds under the market-place, while I spoke from Ephes. v, 19, *Awake thou that sleepest, &c.* My soul upon the whole was much at liberty, and the people seemed much revived." An old lady of one of the most respectable families in the town, who was awakened to a sense of religion under his ministry, used frequently to describe his first visit to Wotton. She was sitting at her tea, when a relation suddenly came in, and said, " Ann, the baronet's son, who goes about preaching, is now under the market-house."



"Are you sure it is the baronet's son himself?" "Yes, that I am, for I saw his brother, Mr. Richard Hill, not long ago, and he is so like him, I am sure he is of the same family." Upon this she accompanied her friend out of curiosity to see and hear the stranger, little thinking of the alteration his preaching would be the means of producing in her own views of herself and of her Saviour. One man who stood by her seized a stone and was going to throw it at Mr. Hill; but another who was near him laid hold of his arm and said, in the broad dialect of Gloucestershire, "if thee dost touch him I'll knock thy head off," when the assailant dropped the stone, and the people all became quiet, overawed by the solemnity of the subject, and the earnestness of the preacher. From Wotton he went to Bath, where he preached "a very offensive sermon, yet much blessed."

In Gloucestershire he lost no opportunity of addressing the multitudes who followed him. The effects produced by his sermons are thus described by himself—"few dry eyes among them"—"certainly God is amongst us"—"all things go on gloriously here"—"a humbling dry time to my own soul"—"a small dead unaffected audience," [in a yard at Cheltenham] "what miserable work it is to preach to the rich," and so on. His chief opponents on this tour, were some of the inhabitants of Devizes, who pelted him with eggs and stones, and followed him to an adjacent village, where "were many poor simple people longing to hear; but some of the Devizes persecutors spoilt the opportunity by molesting us as much as they could." He found also a similar spirit of opposition at Marlborough, where he preached "upon the green, from Isa. xlviii, 22, *There is no peace for*

*the wicked*, to a very rude and rebellious congregation, who laughed even at the mention of the text—they pelted me with stones and eggs, but through mercy I was not hurt.”

The next scene of Mr. Rowland Hill's exertions was Plymouth and its neighbourhood, where he preached to immense congregations, though “much distressed by a letter” he had received from certain influential persons forbidding him to preach “in their parts” any more. From Plymouth he returned to Bristol, and visited many of the places before-mentioned in its vicinity; after which he made a tour in South Wales, which concluded the labours of 1771.

Towards the close of this year he received a letter from Shipman, one of the expelled from Oxford in 1768, giving him an account of the triumphant death of one of his brothers, two of whom he had lost. It is the production of a devout, and certainly not an *illiterate* person. “Why,” says he, “art thou cast down, O my soul! Is there not reason to rejoice? The spirits of two of my dear brothers are now with God. All hail, ye happy spirits; now are you joined to the glorious company of archangels, angels, and spirits of just men made perfect; now do you see Jesus, whom unseen you loved; now are you singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and worshipping the great and glorious God face to face; now, while I am left in a world of misery, and surrounded with mighty enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, you are secure in the embraces of your God, and basking in the beams of uncreated glory.” This is the energetic language of one, who but for the sentence passed on him at Oxford, would gladly have become a minister of the church of England, and whose irregularities



were only occasioned by his horror at the darkness visible which covered, as with a funeral pall, the face of the whole land.

January, 1772, found Mr. Rowland Hill in his usual winter quarters at Hawkstone, where he received accounts in letters from his friends, of the results of his itinerancy during the preceding summer. One of his correspondents, Mr. Hunt, of Bristol, in a letter dated Jan. 22, 1772, says, "I frequently call to mind the blessed seasons we have had together, when the Lord's glory shone round about us, and his power rested upon our souls. With what pleasure did I then behold the large and attentive congregations hanging as it were upon your lips. O for more of those glorious times, however enthusiastic in the sight of the world, and imprudent in the sight of some professors. They were of God—they led to God." Speaking of Mr. Richard Hill, he writes—"your dear brother in his letter desires to be remembered to us. Be pleased to present my kind respects to him in behalf of hundreds to whom he is very dear. His labours of love last summer will be long had in remembrance." To this letter is added the following postscript:—"Mr. Kinsman in a letter to a friend writes thus—Dear Mr. Hill was much blessed at Plymouth to the stirring up of many young professors, &c.; may God fill you with humility."

After what has been before stated of Mr. Richard Hill, the allusion to his labours in this letter will be received with surprise. The circumstances under which he was prevailed on to preach are as remarkable as the fact itself. Sir Rowland Hill, gratified by his cessation from his once favourite pursuit, sent him to Bristol to prevail on his brother Rowland to

follow his example and return home. On his arrival at Bristol, Mr. Richard Hill heard that Rowland was gone to Kingswood to preach to the colliers. He immediately followed him, and found him surrounded by an immense multitude of these long neglected people, listening with the greatest interest to the solemn appeal he was making to their consciences. Mr. Rowland Hill saw his brother, and guessing his errand, only proceeded with increased earnestness; and such was the power of his address, that the black faces of the poor colliers soon exhibited innumerable channels of tears, which the sermon had caused them to shed. Mr. Richard Hill was much affected by the unusual scene, and his brother Rowland taking advantage of his emotion, announced, at the conclusion of the service—"My brother, Richard Hill, Esq. will preach here at this time to-morrow." Taken by surprise under the impression produced by what he had just witnessed, Mr. Richard Hill consented to preach to the colliers; and instead of returning with his brother to Hawkstone, became his coadjutor in the very work he designed to persuade him to relinquish. This is the true version of a story which has been variously related, and is one of the remarkable instances of the tact and persuasive power possessed by Mr. Rowland Hill.

Testimonies of his usefulness, similar to those contained in the letter of Mr. Hunt, were sent him from many other quarters, together with congratulations on the kind reception, accompanied with some trials, he informed his friends he had received in his own family. No one wrote to him with more cordiality than his old friend Mr. Berridge, who was looking forward to the enjoyment of receiving him at Ever-

ton, when he came to the university to take his master of arts degree. He tells him that he must consider his admission to his father's house as "mercy from the Lord, who prevents expulsion after nine month's itineration;" and adds, "your retreat must have its trials too; and kindly they are provided, lest you should love a retreat too well, and tarry too long." He advises him, moreover, to go on as soon as possible with his work, in spite of all opposition, and says—"you need not doubt of being in God's way, because he owns your word"—"make the best of your time; and whilst the Lord affords travelling health and strong lungs, blow your horn soundly." In conclusion he adds, "I do not invite you to Everton when you come to Cambridge, because a man who has possession of my heart may enter my house without a call. Hearty love and respectful salutations to your brother; and hope when he visits Yelling he will not forget Everton. I have a chapel and a cathedral at his service. Grace be with you and with your J. B——e."

Following his old friend's advice, Mr. Rowland Hill came out from his retreat at Hawkstone in the spring of 1772, and visited his favourite Bristol, where, and in its vicinity, he preached many sermons. It appears from his memoranda that he went five times to Wotton-under-edge, though without any idea of making that most lovely spot his residence. During this tour the hills, woods, and vales of Gloucestershire, were the scenes of his addresses to many thousands who assembled around him, and the character of the man had now begun to make an impression even on his enemies.

In the summer of this year, Mr. Rowland Hill was

the means of reviving Mr. Whitefield's cause in London, and preached to immense congregations at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court chapel. His residence was the Tabernacle house in Moorfields, from which he made preaching excursions in the neighbourhood of London, in addition to his labours in the metropolis itself. The effect of his addresses to the people on these occasions were extraordinary in the extreme. One individual wrote him word for his encouragement, that the Lord had blessed the truths he had delivered to "hundreds," nay, he might safely say "thousands," and earnestly entreats him to return as soon as possible, as "multitudes longed for the time when they should hear him again." "Many," he continues, "I have visited on their sick beds,<sup>4</sup> blessing God for the time they heard you. Notes of thanks were put up from whole families stirred up to seek the Lord by your ministry."

While Mr. Rowland Hill was engaged in London, captain Joss, a zealous follower of Mr. Whitefield, was visiting and stirring up his Gloucestershire hearers, and sent him from time to time accounts of the progress of their cause, to which he added urgent exhortations to continue his exertions. "Enterprising captains," he says, "in time of war make great interest to get roving commissions, in order that they may cruise where they please, and that an oppor-

<sup>4</sup> Many instances of this kind occurred as the result of his preaching: one most unexpectedly happened to myself. In the year 1821, Mr. Rowland Hill preached at Norwich, and about four years afterwards an old woman was brought from that city into the workhouse of Acle. She was taken ill, and I visited her, and found that she was acquainted with the way of salvation as it is in Jesus. I enquired of her by what means she was brought to a knowledge of the way of life. She replied, "three or four years ago, I saw a crowd going along a street in Norwich; I asked where they were going; and they told me to hear a famous preacher called Rowland Hill. I followed them and could scarcely squeeze in; but I heard him, and the Lord blessed that sermon to my soul. I knew nothing of Christ before, but bless the Lord I know him now." She died happily, trusting in her Saviour.

tunity might thereby fall in their way of making many prizes ; while lazy and cowardly captains make interest for a line of battle ship, in order that they may sculk under the lee of an admiral. God hath honoured you with a roving commission, and I am very glad that you keep the sea." If "dubbed Captain Crazy" by poltroons, he advises him to disregard it, for "true sailors" would "go through fire and water for him, and love him dearly." "Thus, he adds, "you see the sailor has tumbled down upon me unawares, but a word to the wise is enough. I have been cruising in the latitude of Gloucestershire for fourteen days, and have met with some pretty smart engagements at Wotton, Dursley, and Rodborough, in particular. Last night, at Frampton, we had one shot fired at us which struck brother Glover between wind and water ; he careened and stopped his leak, and we presently silenced the enemies, and I sincerely hope real good was done."

Captain Joss was not his only assistant at this time ; there were those in Gloucestershire whose lives were spent in the endeavour to rouse their listless neighbourhood to a sense of religion. Amongst them, there was a man of the name of Hogg, a grazier and large butcher, at Painswick. He was a person whose character for integrity was so thoroughly appreciated, that even the irreligious farmers in the neighbourhood often said to him in dealing, "Mr. Hogg, we know you will give us the value of our cattle ; you are the best judge of the proper price, take them and pay us what you think them worth." Never in a single instance did they regret their confidence in his honesty. Amidst all his eccentricities his reputation was unblemished ; and though not slothful in business, he

was most fervent in spirit. He too, wrote to Mr. Rowland Hill to encourage and comfort him. He assures him of his respect, and urges him to redoubled diligence. "I pray," he says, "for your life; but I hardly think you will live many years; and though I cannot spare you, I will not say spare thyself; for if I know my heart, I do pray the Lord to give poor barren self leave to kill myself in crying aloud to poor sinners, and if I am not hoarse and weak for two or three days after the sabbath, I think I have been barren and dead." This man had tasted of the love of Christ, and devoted himself to the work of inviting others to participate in the same comforts he had himself so richly enjoyed.

In the summer of this year, Mr. Rowland Hill proceeded to the degree of master of arts, at Cambridge, and visited his friends in the neighbourhood of the university. He also preached in London, and in many places in Kent and Surry, after which he retired, as the winter came on, to the seat of his family in Shropshire. From his friend Captain Jess he received, while there, accounts of his converts in London—"we have taken" he informs him "above one hundred into society concerning whom it may be said that you were the happy instrument of opening their eyes. There are many more with whom I have conversed, who I sincerely trust will be your crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord—indeed, my dear brother, what the Lord hath done by you in London, cannot but afford you matter of joy and humiliation."

The style of Mr. Rowland Hill's addresses to the people, were at this period of life extremely simple and forcible; they abounded with lucid views of the doctrines of the gospel, mingled with sudden bursts of

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vivid, sublime, and sometimes singular illustrations. A specimen of his mode of appealing to the people is to be found in a preface to a little work containing an address to those who had been converted by his ministry in London. It is dated Tabernacle house, August 27th, 1772, and begins—"How happy is the man that can assume this character to himself—a sinner saved! Stop and consider—is it thine? O then, what miracles of mercies have been revealed to thy heart! The world by nature know nothing of our Immanuel; but the convinced sinner knows that he is lost without him; he sees that he cannot be more completely fallen, or more certain of destruction than he is in himself. This strikes at the root of all his self-righteous pride, and compels him to cry out as with the prophet of old, 'Woe is me, for I am undone,' Isa. vi, 5. He now trembles at justice, and prays for mercy. He sees nothing else but flaming vengeance held forth by the law; and he owns that he deserves it as his portion for his iniquities. His legal hopes from a covenant of works now fall to the ground. Then it is the Lord the Spirit divinely convinces of the work of Jesus: he sees it, and is enabled, as his faith increases, to rest satisfied with the fulness of it: he rejoices in the dignity of it, and is happy in the security of it. This teaches him boldly to renounce all his *home-spun* righteousness as dung and dross: he dares not bring it as a condition at first, or as a wretched adjunct to complete the whole at last: no; he renounces it *wholesale*, and is enabled to rest only upon Jesus as his everlasting *all*.

"But does he not upon these principles renounce the law? Yes, as a covenant of works, he renounces it altogether; for, "he is dead to the law through the body



of Christ, that he may be married to another." But does he renounce it also as a rule of life? No, by no means; for in this point of view he is still under the law of Christ; and love to Christ makes him return obedience as his privilege. Besides, among his new testament blessings, he has given him in covenant, with Christ his head, a new, i. e. an obedient heart. O blessed are they then that believe in Jesus; they have all things, the best of things, and all too for nothing." The doctrines stated here are a complete refutation of the charge of antinomianism so frequently brought against him. This awful error he denounced from his earliest days, to a few hours before he entered into his Saviour's presence in a world of glory. His doctrinal opinions remained unaltered to the latest moments of his existence. In speaking of the doctrine of election he used often to say—"here I am lost; I cannot fathom with my puny understanding the mystery of the divine decrees—I can only say with St. Paul *O the depth*. I know it is my duty to invite *all* to Christ, but the Holy Spirit of the living God can alone enable the sinner to accept the invitation. I do not like the word *Reprobation*—*Præterition* is as far as I can go—why God *passes by* some and accepts others I cannot tell—we must wait *till we see as we are seen, and know as we are known*. We know nothing—can any man tell me *why* grass is green?—then let us leave all *explanations* and believe what God has revealed."

Before he was ordained, the doctrines of Mr. Rowland Hill were exceedingly misrepresented; and in the controversies which took place on these questions, there were found persons ready to fan, rather than to allay, a flame which tended only to consume, and not



to enlighten the portions of the christian camp in which it burned. In a letter dated London, Nov. 16, 1772, Captain Joss, no doubt on the information of others, tells him "Mr. W——y said last night, election was the most horrid monster upon earth; no name, said he, is bad enough for it, or them that hold it; they are obliged to draw a veil over it, and only let a corner of the monster be seen, for if the beast were wholly unmasked, nineteen of the people out of twenty would run away—and also said that he would write to the bench of b——s and that he would make Mr. R. H. ashamed of himself. Indeed he seems almost [in a] frenzy—many, many, many, send hearts full of love to you." On this and similar reports Mr. Rowland Hill remarks, in vindication of the practical nature of his preaching—"I bless God, it is our mercy (who are called Calvinists) that we can appeal to heaven, as well as to the consciences of all our hearers, that in the integrity of our hearts we are ever bearing the *swiftest witness* against all iniquity, without the least reserve; and that we are making it the subject of almost every discourse, that *without holiness, personal and universal holiness, no man shall see the Lord*. Yet with the greatest injustice is Mr. Wesley ever branding us with the detested name of *antinomians*, while he *must* be convinced, that in our inmost souls, we entirely disown both the principles and practices of those revolters from obedience; insomuch, that I have often known it to be a fact, that when some of those good people connected with him have ventured to break through his command to hear what dreadful doctrines we *antinomians* have to advance, they have been as much astonished at what they have heard in favour of holiness as if they had been sitting upon *enchanted*

*ground."* No two Christians born of the spirit of God can have *essential* differences—had there existed, in the times to which we are referring, such a centre of union as the bible society, upon whose platform all the varied colours of the prism are blended together in one common purity and brightness,—had these zealous men come more together, slight would have been the controversy now to be recorded as having taken place between them.

### CHAPTER III.

*Mr. Rowland Hill prepares for marriage and orders.*

IN the beginning of the year 1773, Mr. Rowland Hill was contemplating in the retirement of Hawkstone two very important events—his marriage and his ordination. During his visits to his brother-in-law he had formed an attachment to his sister, Miss Tudway, founded upon the evidences he perceived in her of the truest piety. Her mind had been diverted by the power of religion from the frivolous pleasures of the world, to seek the solid enjoyments of a life devoted to God; and the choice of Mr. Hill could not have fallen on a lady more calculated to promote the happiness he was permitted to enjoy, in a union of nearly sixty years' duration. All the stories which have been told of his carelessness as a husband, and his public allusions to this excellent lady, are utterly without foundation. He was only amused at most of the anecdotes related of him, and said—"I wonder at people's invention;" but when told it had been reported that he had made some remarks in public on Mrs. Hill's dress, he exclaimed with indignation—"It is an abominable untruth—derogatory to my character as a Christian and a gentleman—they would make me out a bear."

The following letter, from Mr. Rowland Hill to Miss Tudway, will be considered by those who read it as a model for the courtship of a Christian. Upon the original are the words in the hand-writing of Mrs. Hill, "First Letter."

MY DEAR MADAM,

I AM told by my dear sister that you are no stranger to a very important correspondence in which you are a person very intimately concerned. Suffer me, dear madam, with the utmost simplicity, to speak all my mind. And first, I think I can safely say with all my heart, as before the presence of God, that I love your person—without this, on both sides the question, there can be no real happiness in such a connection as you know is upon the *tapis*. Permit me also to say, that I am fully persuaded of the truest work of grace upon your soul; and though I know the sincerity of your mind makes you at times doubt of every thing, yet your very doubts to me are the strongest evidence of the sincerity of your heart. Thus, as a man and as a Christian, with your leave, would I be glad to make choice of you as my partner through life. But now, dear madam, let us, above all things, consult matters honestly before God as to your union with a poor worm in the character of a minister of Christ. Here I will be explicit, as I mean, above all things, to be honest before God. The present plan of labour, to which it seems evident to me it has pleased God to call me, will frequently compel me to leave my home, wherever it may be, and to take up at times the life of an itinerant, and such a life as this you must expect will sometimes be attended, as to myself, with hardships and contempt. Were your kind-

ness for my person, however it might be the language of love, to make you attempt to dissuade me from this, such dissuasion would not only be a burden upon my mind, but also, if not complied with, a grief to yourself—and now, dear madam, if such an union should take place, do you think you could make your mind perfectly easy in thus giving me up to the service of the Lord? Can you be contented to see me a despised pilgrim for my once despised master, rejected for my labours, and reproached for my God? I know the diffidence of your mind will make you a little stagger at these questions, and yet I believe, at the same time, you will find something arising at the bottom of your mind earnestly anxious to answer them aright. And should such be your views, should you be enabled to love me on the one hand, and yet to give me up when called to it on the other, suffer me to frame to myself the happy idea of being possessed of such a companion in tribulation, and such a partaker of my joys, as will give me reason of thankfulness to the day of my death.

Thus much, however, you have of the dark side of the question, and I choose that you should know it, as I would not deceive you on any terms whatever: in other respects, as I am sure I love your person, I shall always think it my pleasure and duty to make your life a happiness to itself. One place we would have (and I wish it might be Bristol) which we might call more peculiarly our home. London is a place which will annually expect a considerable share of my time and labours; and from the generous treatment I have ever received from all concerned in these parts, I have no doubt but you will enjoy, as being connected with me, equal freedom, without expense or trouble, as if entirely at home.

Will you be so kind as to inform my dear sister Tudway that, after much consultation before the Lord, I sent the letter, as she altered it, to my dear father last Tuesday. As yet I have received no answer; when I have, you and she shall immediately hear the event. In about a week's time I shall move towards Cambridge, if nothing in Sir Rowland's letter prevents. I do not request, though I shall wait with earnestness, for a speedy answer to this. Dear madam, take your time, pray it over, and if you can write, write all that is in your mind: but if you choose not to do this, speak to my dear kind sister, and she will tell me what you say upon this occasion.

My dear madam, may grace be with you, and may we both be directed for the best. So prays

Your most truly affectionate friend

and servant for Christ's sake,

ROWLAND HILL.

There is no date to this letter, but from mention of the journey to Cambridge, and the expression, "these parts," in reference to London, it appears to have been written from the metropolis, just before he left it to take his master of arts degree in 1772.

It was through the instrumentality of Mr. Tudway that Mr. Rowland Hill was ordained deacon. The state of mind in which he contemplated this event will be best illustrated in his own words, in a letter to Miss Tudway.

*Berwick, February 2nd, 1773.*

MY VERY DEAR MADAM,

I suppose by this time you, my dear sister, &c., are now all got safe to London, I therefore sit down

to tell you all about it. I did not get home till Friday last, and was stopped on the Thursday, on the road, by the severest wetting I think I ever met with. Upon my arrival I found all things well ; nothing was said about my long stay from home, as they did not themselves expect me before. I am now for a day or two with Mr. Powys, of Berwick.

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Now concerning this application to your old bishop for ordination. Mr. Tudway's kindness in offering his assistance I most gratefully acknowledge, and for the sake of the pleasure it would give my friends and relations, glad should I be to see the event brought about. So far as I can, therefore, without wounding my conscience, I would do the utmost in my power not to frustrate the event ; and if Mr. Tudway chooses first to sound [the bishop's] inclinations about it, and there seems a probability of success, I believe I could, with a safe conscience, while matters are in agitation for a time, withdraw from more public labours, so as not to give immediate disgust.

I can, however, never think of making any future promises of altering my conduct from what it is at present, even after ordination, if I should see it my duty still to go on as before.

\* \* \* \* \*

It might be represented that I am a younger brother with a small fortune, that I was *bred up for the church*, have taken two degrees, consequently much has been expended on my education ; but that all is lost upon me without ordination—and that it is now too late to turn my hands to any other employment in life, &c. &c. &c.—and if he (the bishop) has heard of all my doings, it might be mentioned to him that, as I have

taken a *religious turn*, it might be much better to ordain me, and let me into the church, *than to compel me to go preaching in the fields, whether I would or no*. Mr. T. might then mention, that if his lordship would take time to consider of it, Mr. Hill would, in the interval, get proper testimonials, title, &c. Perhaps also, it might not be amiss to say, if he should not willingly comply, that Mr. R. Hill only requests the favour of deacon's orders, as the bishop of Carlisle has promised second orders whenever he applies. If he should ask the reason of this, it may be said, that as he unfortunately met with a repulse from the late bishop of Ely, the bishop of Carlisle, being then but just come upon the bench, was unwilling to counteract the bishop of Ely, but [said] that after I was ordained deacon he would ordain me priest without any delay. Let me not, however, be thought to direct Mr. T. by these hints; he knows best the bishop's temper, and, consequently, how to proceed. My brother also may be consulted.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the bishop comes down to Wells, I dare venture to say, that canon Lovel will speak a kind word on my behalf, since I did not, while there, either preach at the *Cross* or give them offence by any *lay-preaching*, as they heard of.

Thus much, my dear madam, concerning ordination. I desire to leave it simply to the Lord, and pray that I may be enabled to preserve a conscience spotless in the affair. I am fully persuaded what is my duty before God. I should be thankful for ordination; but as I am forbidden to *salute any man by the way*, I must go forward. At present I am what the world despises as a lay itinerant. I am certainly convinced



of the Lord's blessing in the work ; this is a point that lies solemn upon my heart ; and, indeed, it gives me the sincerest happiness that my dear Miss T. would rather have me preserve an honest conscience before God, than by in the least injuring it, to enjoy the greatest advantages that this world can give. I should be glad, my dear Madam, if you could hasten these matters, that my mind may be freed from a state of suspense. In the interval, I shall set myself hastily in concluding matters here as to our union, and shall wait, not without anxiety, to hear how the bishop sounds, that I may know when speedily to prepare for my journey to London, that all things may be concluded as soon as convenient. I cannot help frequently making you the subject of my prayers. You are to be united to one who must bear the cross—this makes me feel for you with a tenderness and sympathy I cannot express. You may tell my dear brother that I made a *loose* at Hardwick last Sunday, [and] am to do so again the next. When I have heard from Bristol about the house in agitation, I will immediately inform you. In the interval, cease not to pray for and write soon to

Yours most sincerely and most affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

To Miss Tudway.

This letter was soon followed by another, alluding to Miss Tudway's state of mind with regard to religion ; and describing his situation at home.

*Hough, Feb. 12, 1773.*

Thanks to my dear Miss T. for her immediate answer to my last on her arrival in London. I am

happy also to hear that a God of providence protected you all safe to your journey's end—and what a mercy it is that we have a faithful, unchangeable, covenant-keeping God in Christ, as our God of grace, to preserve us safe in our journey from time to eternity. In spite of all your doubts and fears, I have no doubt for you, whatever you may have for yourself, that this will be your end, happiness, and consolation everlasting. You say in your letter that you fear you are a hypocrite, though it is written for your consolation “blessed is the man that feareth always;” yet sure I am that this your *much-afraid* language is nothing better than the language of unbelief. You are too much for looking into self; you there find that all is misery. O, my dear madam, look but to Jesus and there is salvation in abundance. 'Tis indeed a glorious thing to know our sins—to hate our sins, and ourselves upon account of them; and when this is known, where should we fly but to *the gospel* for a remedy? Remember this, that *Mary Tudway is as bad as she can be*—she is *utterly undone*<sup>5</sup>—now where is she to look? Only to Jesus. Her vile heart never can withstand the power of his grace. Has she millions of sins that threaten her destruction? the Lord has received double for them all. In Jesus she is complete:—the Lord give her poor trembling heart to believe this; and then as she is soon to change one of her names, so she will soon lose another—that ugly name *much-afraid* you will then be enabled entirely to disown.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hawkstone at present is a furnace indeed. You may tell my brother that last Sunday, through the instigation of —, Sir Rowland absolutely forbad me

<sup>5</sup> The doctrine of *total depravity* was one on which he always strongly insisted.

leaving the family, so that poor Hardwick cannot have my attendance. I shall make some other trials; the success that may attend them must be left to the Lord. I wrote to my brother sometime ago largely, upon the subject of my ordination, and now expect every post to hear from him again. My present situation is nothing but idleness, and almost total loss of time; this hurts my conscience not a little. I am sadly fearful lest these attempts for ordination should keep me longer from my work, which I am so fully persuaded of my call to from the Lord. Pray my dear brother to hasten on these matters, that I may know whether I can spare the time that may be required for this affair. As yet I have heard nothing from Bristol about the house. When I have I will let you know. My sister wants to add a postscript, and I have almost filled up the paper.

I remain yours most sincerely and affectionately,

R. HILL.

Love to all dear christian relations. My sister's pretty postscript is in the cover.

Notwithstanding the difficulties attendant upon his entrance into orders from his former lay preaching, Mr. Rowland Hill could not resist leaving Hawkstone in March this year, upon a short journey. His own diary affords us this information.

"March 24, 1773, set out from Hawkstone; reached Coventry, preached at six in the evening, to a small congregation, notice not having been given, in the Baptist Meeting-House, upon Solomon's Song iv, 12—*The church of Christ a garden enclosed.*" He says of Coventry—"an appearance of good seems arising here." He continues,

"Friday, March 26, hastened to Northampton where I preached in the late Dr. Doddridge's meeting-house, to a large assembly, on *Moses lifting up the serpent in the Wilderness*, John ii, 14, 15. Evening, to a still larger congregation, on *the Prodigal Son*, Luke xv. "Lord's day morn, preached in the same place; excessively crowded, many stood without. Most attentive and serious, Rev. iii, 10, *Behold I stand at the door and knock*, &c. Blessed be God for a good appearance at Coventry and Northampton."

Olney, March 28, the same eve reached this place; a very large congregation from every quarter attended. No meeting house would nearly hold them. Preached out of doors for the first time. *Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*, Mark xvi, 15, 16.

From Olney he went to Woburn, the residence of his friend Mr. Grove, a gentleman of fortune, who, but for his expulsion from Oxford in 1768, would have devoted himself to the church, from which he did not separate till he was refused readmission to the university, though he promised in future to conform to the statutes.

At Woburn, Mr. Rowland Hill preached on five occasions to large and attentive assemblies, with such success, that he remarks in his journal—"blessed be God for the appearance of great good here." Miss Tudway justly feared that these irregularities would become known, and prove a hindrance to his admission into orders, and gave him her affectionate advice to discontinue them. This drew from him the following letter.

MY DEAR MADAM,

STILL do I continue a prisoner, though a prisoner at large, under this hospitable roof. I wish I could get from hence to Cambridge, but cannot contrive it without either coming round by London, or being at a considerable expence in hiring a man and horse to travel with me across the country, to carry the few things I have with me. Besides, I really think my staying here will be much better, upon second consideration, than going to so public a place as Cambridge, where I am so well known, and where I shall meet with many solicitations to preach. Here therefore I will stay, and I have a hearty welcome till the bishop's answer is received. On Saturday at furthest, I shall hope to receive it, as I really dread staying over here on the Sunday, my temptations to preach will I know be so great; and if I do not, as I am known in these parts, I know it will slacken dear Grove's hands, and grieve the dear people of God in the neighbourhood.

Here, as well as in other places, there seems to be a more extensive opening than ever—O that I were at liberty to labour for my God. I wish you may be at ease about my conduct, since I can assure you I act with all the caution in my power. I wish you never to feel one painful sensation about me, but that the kindest harmony of disposition may ever subsist between us. I know your heart is upright before God—your fearing mind frequently perplexes you. I am sure it is a sign of a most tender heart, and such tender hearted disciples shall never want direction from above.

If the bishop chooses to ordain [me] *without promise or condition*, I should really prefer Scotland for many reasons. This however must be considered at

another time. That the Lord may direct us both at all times is the constant prayer of

Yours ever most tenderly [and] affectionately,

R. HILL.

Woburn near Beaconshead, Bucks,  
Thursday evening.

The answer of the bishop being favourable, Mr. Rowland Hill, though most reluctantly, withdrew into his native county—"there being," are the words in his journal, "a considerable prospect of my ordination—retired into Shropshire, and preached a few sermons at Hardwick, Marchamley, &c." Preaching was indeed his element; it was an exercise necessary to the health and vigour of his mind, so that Mrs. Hill used frequently to say, in his declining years, "what I dread, is lest he should ever be so feeble as not to be able to preach—in that case, what would become of him I cannot tell." It appears in a letter to Miss Tudway, written a few weeks before he went to London to be married, that he was most impatient of the restraint now placed upon him, and that he trembled, lest any of his former followers and friends should attribute his silence to the diminution of his zeal. "All that I fear is," he says, "lest my being in London should get wind, and lest my silence, and apparent change of conduct, should disgust or dishearten the dear children of God. I have the tenderest sensations about these matters that can be conceived. I seem to be assured it is absolutely necessary for me to be as secret in London as possible, and I hope we shall be moving out of it again as soon as convenient. Ill tempered professors, that hate the power of godliness, already triumph—their triumphs have in a measure

perplexed some that are sincere. The hearing of this has grieved me not a little. I do hope and trust that this triumph of the wicked is to be short. Till then, the utmost caution I am convinced should be used, and other matters must be left to God." In this letter he also expresses his intention of giving up the house at Bristol, and informs Miss Tudway that a house was building for him at Wotton-under-edge.

On the twenty third of May, 1773, Mr. Rowland Hill was married at Mary-le-bone church, and went immediately with Mrs. Hill into Somersetshire, where he was ordained deacon, on the Trinity Sunday following, by Dr. Wills, the aged bishop of Bath and Wells. His title to orders was the parish of Kingston in that county, and his stipend forty pounds a year. His own record of his entrance into the church is in these words—"On Trinity Sunday, June 6th, through the kind and unexpected interposition of providence, was I ordained by the bishop of Bath and Wells *without any promise or condition whatever.*" He proceeds—"Tuesday, June 8th, preached my first sermon at Bristol in a church, for dear Mr. Rouquet, at St. Werburghs, to a large congregation—*Come out from among them, &c.* 2 Cor. vi, 17, 18—some-what assisted."

Mr. Rouquet was one of his most valued and intimate friends. He was the son of a French protestant refugee, whose father was condemned to the gallies for his religion. He was educated at Merchant Tailor's school, and at St. John's college, Oxford. He became, at the request of Wesley, the superintendent of the school at Kingswood near Bristol, for the education of the children of Methodists, and the sons of itinerant preachers. He was, nevertheless, ordained



deacon by Dr. Johnson, bishop of Gloucester, but was dismissed from his curacy for preaching from house to house, and in the gaol of Bristol. He was, notwithstanding, presented to a vicarage by the lord chancellor, and ordained priest by Dr. Wills, bishop of Bath and Wells, who was so pleased with his examination, that although a strong cry of *Methodist* was raised against him, he appointed him to preach at the next ordination. His text was, *Feed my sheep*; but the sermon drew down upon him such severe censures, that the bishop desired a copy of it might be sent him, and after having read it, wrote him a most affectionate letter, expressing his entire approbation of its doctrines, and assuring him of the continuance of his friendship. After this, Mr. Rouquet pursued his own course unhindered, and he preached at the opening of the Tabernacle, at Trowbridge, in 1771; and in the same place, on the anniversaries of that event, till his death in 1776, without any notice being taken of his irregularity.

This being the history of Mr. Rouquet, it will be no matter of surprise that Mr. Rowland Hill preached his first sermon after ordination, at St. Werburghs, Bristol. The next place he visited was Kingswood, the scene of the singular adventure between himself and his brother Richard. Here he collected around him once more, the poor ignorant colliers; and after addressing them with the most affectionate earnestness, he proceeded to Wotton, as appears from his diary.

“Friday, June 11th, Wotton. *Only fear the Lord, and serve him; for consider how great things the Lord hath done for thee, &c. &c.* 1 Sam. xii, 21, 22, &c. Afterwards had a sacrament with my dear brother Joss.”



He preached once at Dursley during his stay at Wotton, but soon returned to Kingswood, where he observes on two of his sermons, that they “were dry hard times—O what an unprofitable worm.” Although he generally perceived and enjoyed a solemn effect on his hearers, he always felt and expressed the humblest conviction of his own weakness. “Oh!” he often exclaimed, “how much better I ought to have preached—Oh! how unworthy I am to be an ambassador for Christ.”

One of his most frequent observations was, that he never remembered to have left the pulpit without a humble recollection of his own unworthiness. His ebullitions of humour and fancy while preaching, were often succeeded by tears of contrite sorrow, and prayers for deeper solemnity of mind. He had naturally a keen sense of the ludicrous, which seemed at times to spread its influence over the entire surface of his mind: like a vapoury cloud, floating across the face of a luminary of the heavens, some comic idea would dim, for an instant, the lustre of his higher conceptions; but on its passing suddenly away, his imagination shone forth in all its splendour, and generally led him into the opposite expressions of pathos or sublimity. This is the constant characteristic of his writings, as it was of his sermons.

On Sunday, June 20, 1773, Mr. Rowland Hill preached his first sermon at his curacy, from 1 Cor. ii, 2, *I am determined to know nothing among you, &c.* and spent “a comfortable day” there. He established a Wednesday evening lecture in his church at Kings-ton, but was much dissatisfied with the attendance. He also preached almost daily in the villages around. Mr. Toplady, very soon after his ordination, invited

him to Broad Hembury, and tried to dissuade him from his irregularities : his remonstrances were, however in vain. He was, as Mr. Berridge said, "a comet," and his path eccentric and unconfined. He went on labouring in many places day after day, till Tuesday, August 24th, when he was "taken violently ill with a bilious complaint, and was silenced" for a few days, but on getting better, re-commenced his herculean exertions. He met with every species of opposition ; was lampooned, burnt in effigy, pelted, and threatened—but none of these things moved him or disturbed his inexhaustible flow of spirits. He placed his family motto, "go forward," on his seal, and acted on its precept. His active itinerancy greatly delighted his old friend Mr. Berridge, who thus begins a letter to him, dated Sept. 3, 1773, "Dear Sir, I mean my dear Rowly, your kind letter was long in coming, but it brought good tidings and refreshed my heart. The motto of your seal rejoiced me much ; it gave me a peep into your bosom, and a taste of your letter before I read it. Indeed I was somewhat afraid lest orders and a \* \* \* \* would cure you of rambling ; but my fears were groundless, and all is well. The lampoon published against you is a blessed omen for good, that God intends to honour you. It seems to me a happy token that you will remain an itinerant, and that much good will arise from your ministry. Luther used to say, when the Lord had fresh work for him, a strong tryal was always sent beforehand to prepare him for it by humiliation. Study not to be a fine preacher. Jerichos are blown down with ram's horns. Look simply unto Jesus for preaching food ; and what is wanted will be given, and what is given be blest, whether it be a barley or a

wheaten loaf, a crust or a crumb. Your mouth will be a flowing stream, or a fountain sealed, according as your heart is. Avoid all controversy in preaching, talking, or writing; preach nothing down but the devil, and nothing up but Jesus Christ." It would have been happy for the then existing christian world, if this rule had been followed; the painful recollection would thus have been spared us, that the champions of the cross quarrelled in the hour of victory. Mr. Berridge once received Mr. Fletcher with all the cordiality of believing love; now he writes in the letter from which his advice to Mr. Hill is quoted!—"Mr. Fletcher has sent me word that my pamphlet contains the lore of antinomianism, and that he is going to publish another check in answer to it. So he may, but he will not draw a reply from me." Of Fletcher it is but justice to say, that he had *put away from him all bitterness*—perhaps not, however, *all clamour*.

In the autumn of this year, Mr. Rowland Hill received from Mr. Ryland, junior, of Northampton, afterwards the well-known Dr. Ryland, of Bristol, accounts of the great success which had followed his visit to that place and country in the spring. He mentions in his letter, the names and religious state of several of his converts, and observes—"If this will not excite you to hasten hither, I do not know what will." He adds, "Hervey goes on well—he supped here last night. Dear Mr. Newton preaches at Collingtree to-day. We have two or three godly old women dying; one poor lad went to Wesley's out of curiosity, and has been half in despair for a while through their falling away doctrine." "They attend," he says with much candour, "at our place, except the fourth, whose relations at Kettering were fright-

ened at too much predestination, too much water, too much methodism, and the encouragement of lay preachers, so they could not be easy with his coming to us, and he goes to Castle Hill ; but he is a very good lad, and goes on *well*."

Having received a promise from the bishop of Carlisle that he would ordain him priest, Mr. Rowland Hill obtained a letter dismissory to his lordship from the bishop of Bath and Wells ; but he excused himself, by saying that he had received an order from the archbishop of his province, not to admit him to a further grade in the church, on account of his perpetual irregularity, and that he considered himself bound to obey it. Thus ended his hopes and attempts to get into full orders.

This disappointment is only slightly noticed in his diary :—"Missing of full orders, with a letter dismissory from the bishop of Bath and Wells to the bishop of Carlisle, I thought it was my duty again to begin my public labours as usual."

This important year Mr. Rowland Hill closed, by great activity, in the metropolis and its vicinity. His journal contains, however, scarcely any thing but the texts he preached from, with here and there a remark—as, "Friday, first time at Richmond, in the old play house." "Wednesday, heard of the death of my dear mother ; she died Friday, Dec. 17th, at half-past eleven." "My first charity sermon at St. Mary Aldermary." Dec. 31st, Greenwich, a concluding sermon for the old year, *Behold I am vile*, Job. xl, 4. Good congregations here."

As he attracted larger numbers at this time than any other person, he was much pressed to preach charity sermons in the churches in London, invitations

which he always accepted with great readiness; and to the end of his life nothing gave him more exquisite pleasure than being asked to preach in a church, and nothing caused him such evident mortification as a refusal to allow him to officiate in an episcopal place of worship. He used often to say—"Good Mr. — asked me to come and see him, but he will not let me preach in his church; I go no where where I cannot preach, and I do not choose to hurt his mind by preaching in a meeting-house while on a visit to him." Sometimes, when mentioning books containing strictures on the establishment, he would exclaim—"I don't like that book, it is full of bigotted railing against the church." Nothing made him more indignant than being called a dissenter—"I am not," he would say; "the church turned me off and not I her—I confess I like *a little more liberty* than she allows, and thank God, I can ask great Dr. Chalmers, and great Dr. Morrison, and others, when they come to London, to preach in Surry Chapel pulpit"—and then he would add, with his own indescribably arch look—"I suppose they would not let St. Paul, if he was to come upon earth now, preach in his own cathedral; but I really do not think it would produce an earthquake if he did." He was soon after his ordination, often preaching by dawn of day, and the shades of evening would close over him engaged in the same exercise, at a distance, perhaps, of many miles from the scene of his morning labours. When night came, instead of being tired, his spirits seemed to rise to their greatest height, and he allowed them full vent in the overflow of his animated conversation. After a day's exertions, which would have completely prostrated the strength of an ordinary man, he appeared uncon-

scious of the slightest fatigue; and when supper was at an end, he became unusually communicative and entertaining, and would tell of his preaching adventures, declare the experience of his own mind, and enliven the social circle with remarks and anecdotes, given in a manner such as those only who knew him in retirement can possibly conceive; and this, perhaps, after four sermons preached to assembled thousands, with an energy of manner and power of voice of the most extraordinary nature. Suddenly, when all the party were raised to the highest pitch of interest, he asked "what's o'clock?" and, finding it was late, he would exclaim—"dearest me, only think of that—it is time for all Methodist preachers to be in bed I am sure"—then, after his night's rest, he began the next day with the same ardour as ever in the service of God.

He was, after his marriage, accompanied by Mrs. Hill on most of his preaching expeditions, and very cheerfully did she share in all the difficulties and privations which attended him in his extraordinary career; and never upon any occasion, in the course of their union of more than half a century, placed the slightest obstacle in the way of what her husband considered his positive duty as a minister of Christ.

This year, as has been noticed in a brief quotation from his diary, Mr. Rowland Hill lost his mother, Lady Hill. No one of his family was so strongly opposed as she was to the course he was pursuing. The choice of the first text he preached from after her decease was remarkably characteristic of him: it was 2 Sam. xxiii, 5—*Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure*—an evident allusion to the religious differences existing between

himself and those of his house, a circumstance well known to the congregation of the Tabernacle before which he preached. The great secret, perhaps, of the amazing effect of his preaching was, its being all nature. He generally choose the subject which impressed and affected his own mind at the moment, and discoursed on it as he felt, not as he had previously thought; and thus, on every occasion, whether joyous or grievous, he found his way to hearts whose strings vibrated in unison with those of his own. Sheridan used to say of him, "I go to hear Rowland Hill because his ideas come red-hot from the heart." Never was there a truer description of the preaching of any minister; he spoke as he felt; and the tears he shed, and the smiles that beamed upon his countenance, soon "wakened up their fellows" in the listening throng that heard him. After one sermon, in which he had poured forth the experience of his pious soul in expressing the exulting feelings of the Christian's joy, Mr. Ambrose Serle came into the vestry of Surry Chapel, and seizing him by the hand, exclaimed—"Oh, my dear sir, if we are so happy now, what shall we be a hundred thousand years hence in heaven?" And on another occasion Dr. Milner, the celebrated dean of Carlisle, was so worked upon, that he went to him and said—"Mr. Hill, Mr. Hill, I *felt* to day—'tis this *slap-dash* preaching, say what they will, that does all the good." The elements of our nature remain unchanged after the highest refinement and cultivation of the understanding; and the same genuine feeling which touched the hearts of these highly gifted men in Mr. Rowland Hill's riper age, was the secret which attracted the spell-bound multitudes who followed him in his youthful days.



## CHAPTER IV.

1774.

MR. ROWLAND HILL's first sermon in the year 1774 was at Tottenham-court chapel, on Sunday, January 2nd; his subject was *the barren fig-tree*. He preached twice more the same day, and on the Monday he proceeded to Berkhamstead, and after expounding, "by way of an opening, at Mr. Langton's," he preached in a church in the neighbourhood. Though every day at this time was filled up with preaching engagements, he has recorded little of them but texts and places. He remarks, on Thursday, January 6th, "Consecration day at Richmond. Morning, upon *worshipping the Father in Spirit and in truth*, John iv, 23, 24.—Afterwards a most blessed sacrament with Messrs. Joss and West. O, when shall we enjoy the like liberty at Tabernacle and Tottenham!" He was much in the habit of seizing upon and spiritualizing the circumstances around him, of which we have an instance in the following entry in his journal:—"Lord's day, Tottenham, upon *the Lord's promise of showers of blessings*—it was a very rainy morning." He made at this time frequent preaching expeditions to Richmond, where he received the most violent opposition. The



first date of his going there this year is Friday, January 27th.—“Richmond, *He will help the feet of his saints, but the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for, &c.*, 1 Sam. ii.—Much confusion.” After entering in his diary the texts of every day, he remarks, “Thursday (February 3rd) dear Mr. Berridge came to town. I read prayers for him; he preached most gloriously.” “Lord’s day, February 6th—Noon, Richmond. Expecting much persecution in the eve, prepared for it by preaching upon, *These things have I spoken unto you that ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, &c.*: John xiv, 33. Afternoon, went to church, and heard myself vehemently taken to task by the parson. Eve, contrary to all expectation, we had a most comfortable and tranquil time. *Unto him that loved us and washed [us] from our sins in his own blood*: Rev. i, 5, 6. Afterwards, a sacrament; dear Mr. West assisted. I trust the Lord was with us—blessed be God, we concluded with victory.” On one occasion an attempt had been made to persuade him not to go to Richmond, because a party of young men had hired a boat, and were coming down the river with the determination to draw him through the water. His feelings may be conceived, when informed the boat was upset, and that the poor misguided enemies of his ministry had all entered into the presence of their Judge in another world.

The next scenes of Mr. Rowland Hill’s labours were Chatham and Sheerness; and on his return from those places to London he preached “The Last Sermon at St. Catherine’s, near the Tower, upon Job’s repentance.” On Sunday, February 27th, he preached at the Tabernacle, and on Monday he says—“took my leave of the chapel society.—Tuesday, general

sacrament. At chapel Mr. Joss assisted for the first time. Blessed be God, thousands communicated; it lasted from six till ten." His journal proceeds, "After a tedious journey arrived safe at Rodborough on Saturday, March 5th. Lord help. Lord's-day morn—Rodborough: a very tempestuous day. *A man shall be a hiding place from the storm, &c. : Isa. xxxii, 2*—afterwards a sacrament. Eve, same place. *Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you, and have ordained you, &c. : John xv, 19*—a good congregation, but a dryish time. I believe good will be done here. My Master help." We have, in his first text mentioned in this extract, an instance of the habit not long ago alluded to. He goes on, "Monday, March 7th, Wotton. *The believer built upon the rock*. Tuesday, Dursley. *The Lord the strength, fortress, and refuge of the afflicted*"—and the next Tuesday, he adds, "went and saw my dear sick father." On his return he went to Gloucester, and preached and read prayers twice at the hospital: "the last a blessed time, but O poor dead Gloucester, how few think it worth their while to hear!" From Gloucester he returned to Wotton, and after preaching there and in the neighbourhood, he made a tour through Wiltshire, at the end of which he observes, "blessed be God, a happy journey through Wiltshire." After this he spent a short time at Bristol, and then went into Wales. While at Bristol, one entry in his diary is, "Tuesday, St. Nicholas; there being a violent thunder-storm at that time, preached upon, *A man being a covert from the storm : Isa. xxxii, 2*." On his way into Wales he preached at "a blessed consecration of an old barn in the morning, on *preparing a habitation for the Lord*." Mr. Rowland Hill was also in the

habit of speaking frequently in the open air, making what he called "his field campaigns," and used to go into large towns on the market days, and address assemblages in the market houses, of which he has briefly recorded several instances. When he heard of a fair or a revel, he would go and try to gain a hearing, in spite of all the violence with which he was constantly assailed. On such occasions, his favorite text was, *Come ye out from among them*, which he often so applied to the consciences of those who gathered round him, that some, convinced of the evil of their course, would retire home, to seek in penitential prayer the Saviour to whom they had been so feelingly invited. Many, very many, were the instances of conversions which attended, on such opportunities, his solemn warnings to the riotous assemblies congregated at these scenes of vice and iniquity.

Several times in the course of his journey through Wales this year, events of a similar description occurred, which greatly encouraged and supported him under an attack of illness; upon which he remarks, "my body quite weak, but my soul was refreshed." A like example had been previously before his eyes in the case of Howel Harris, one of Mr. Whitefield's most energetic followers, who was a man of extraordinary powers of body and mind. Harris used to relate of himself, that being once on a journey through Wales, he was subjected to great temptations to desert his Master's cause, when he said "Satan I'll match thee for this"—and "so I did," he used to add, "for I had not ridden many miles before I came to a revel, where there was a show of mountebanks, which I entered, and just as they were commencing, I jumped into the midst of them and cried out 'let us pray,'"

which so thunderstruck them that they listened to me quietly, while I preached them a most tremendous sermon that frightened many of them home." Mr. Rowland Hill greatly delighted in this anecdote, and often considered that amidst somewhat similar scenes, he had been enabled successfully to assail the kingdom of Satan. The number of sermons he preached on this tour in Wales, was astonishing; at least three, and sometimes four a day, and none of less duration than an hour. The Welsh people followed him by thousands from place to place, and he has often said that nothing could prevent their attendance. Many a time has he stood during a shower of rain, preaching to a vast concourse of peasantry, who remained as unconcerned and attentive as though the sky had been without a cloud. He often used to mention this to his English hearers, when the weather had kept them at home on the sabbath. "If," he would say, "you loved the gospel as the Welsh do, you would not mind a shower." Nothing, however, made him so angry as the enthusiasm of the jumpers, whom he called the caricaturists of religion. Once, moved by the energy of his manner, numbers of them rose in the chapel and began to jump; he cried aloud "let us have no more of this mummary and nonsense." Notwithstanding this rebuke, as Mrs. Hill and he were sitting together in the inn, two men asked to speak to him about his sermon; but on entering the room they began to jump like madmen; "If you will have such nonsense you may have it to yourselves," he said quietly, and retired till the jumpers went away. He could not endure any thing bordering on fanaticism; "this," he used to say, "is not the fine, sublime, gentle, yet irresistible work of the Holy Ghost on the

soul, making us not fanatics and enthusiasts, but new creatures in Christ Jesus."

Whilst on the last mentioned expedition, Mr. Rowland Hill was not forgotten by his London friends. A long letter from captain Joss, which reached him whilst travelling, describes the condition of his hearers in the metropolis and its neighbourhood. "You ask," he says, "if I can tell you any gospel news? Yes, my dear brother, glory be to our dear Emmanuel, his word runs and is glorified. You have need to be greatly humbled before the Lord; for it may be said *in truth* respecting you what Gideon said *ironically* concerning the men of Ephraim, Judges viii, 2: *Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?* Your last visit has been remarkably blest; many have been awakened, several of which have joined the society. I shall mention one very remarkable instance which came to my knowledge last Saturday, from the person's own mouth. A young lady came to hear you out of curiosity, when it pleased the Lord to call her, I believe savingly. She was greatly persecuted by an elder brother, who was head of the family, as the mother is a widow; however, by her patience and conversation she was made the means of the conversion of a sister, and that sister of another, and she of the conversion of the aged mother; and who knows but the Lord may save the brother also? Thus the Lord gives them you by clusters: no wonder you meet with so much ballast; you would upset without it. A ship that is built for war, requires a great quantity of ballast to counterpoise her metal which she carries upon her upper deck. Things at Tabernacle and chapel<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Tottenham-court chapel and the Tabernacle, Moorfields.

are just as you left them, only I have not been at chapel sacrament since the first time with you."

Towards the end of this long letter the worthy sailor adds—"The Lord triumphs at Richmond, and persecution runs high. The different times I hove them, we have been stoned, covered with dirt out of the kennel, &c." Little do we know, in these days of tranquillity and peace, what these zealous revivalists had to suffer from the violence of mobs, as well as from the contempt of men of the world, who despised their persons and avoided their society.

In the course of this summer's tour, Mr. Rowland Hill visited and preached at Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca, on 2 Cor. xii, 10: *When I am weak, then I am strong*, a text he was very fond of, because he said no "one but a Christian could understand its meaning<sup>1</sup>;" in proof of which he would add, "a worldly-wise divine absolutely said, 'I am sure that fellow Whitefield is mad now, for I heard him say with my own ears, *when I am weak, then I am strong*.' O how certain is it, that none can comprehend the word of God, but by the aid of the enlightening influences of the Holy Ghost." It was at Trevecca that the first opposition arose to the declaration of Wesley, in the celebrated conference of 1775. Lady Huntingdon ordered all those who refused to disavow the doctrines contained in its minutes,<sup>7</sup> immediately to leave the

<sup>7</sup> The parts of these minutes, so strongly objected to, have been often published, and, therefore, it is unnecessary to introduce them at length here. The passages which were most condemned as tending to support the doctrine of salvation by *works* were these—"We said, in 1774, 'we have leaned too much towards Calvinism. Wherein?

"1. With regard to *man's faithfulness*. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression, and we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' God will not give him the true riches.

"2 With regard to *working for life*. This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. Labour, ἐργαζέσθαι, literally, 'work for the meat that endureth to



Welsh college. Mr. Fletcher, the superintendent, being called upon to give his sentiments in writing on these points, without reserve, admitted that the wording of the minutes was unguarded and inexplicit; but after explaining them in his own way, he vindicated and approved the doctrines they contained, and resigned his appointment. Wesley's next conference was held at Bristol, where his adherents were met by a sort of anti-council summoned by the honourable Walter Shirley, one of Lady Huntingdon's chaplains, who manifested a most conciliatory spirit on the occasion. In this he was met by the leader of the Methodists, who acknowledged that certain expressions in the minutes, which gave rise to the dispute, were unguarded as to *working for salvation*, and that they had no "merit or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord Jesus Christ for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment; and though no one is a real Christian believer, (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works, where there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification either in whole or in part." This declaration appeared to satisfy Wesley's opponents, and the meeting was concluded with prayer and mutual professions of brotherly love. The result also of the conference was made known to the world.

This calm unhappily lasted but a short time: the old question was raised again, and the dispute was car-

everlasting life.' And in fact, every believer till he comes to glory, works *for*, as well as *from*, life.

"3. We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should 'cease to do evil, and learn to do well.' Whoever repents, should 'do works meet for repentance.' And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?"

ried on with more violence than ever. Numerous pamphlets were published on both sides, and to the arguments contained in them were added the keenest ridicule and the strongest possible invective. Mr. Richard Hill wrote a great deal upon the subject; and Mr. Rowland Hill, with Messrs. Toplady, Berridge, and Hervey, entered into the same arena. The titles of some of these productions were singular enough, *Farrago double distilled—An old fox tarred and feathered*, alluding to Wesley—*Pope John—Logica Genevensis—The finishing stroke*, and others of the same character; and it is but justice to Mr. Rowland Hill to remark that in his maturer age, though he still retained his views as to the doctrines he opposed, he lamented that the controversy had not been carried on in a different spirit. It has been often asserted, that the pamphlets and other publication on the part of Wesley and his followers, were models of temper and forbearance, while those written by the Hills and their adherents abounded in invective and abuse. Mr. Rowland Hill shall here speak for himself. He excused his severity of expression by a quotation from Cicero—"ut ad *urendum* et *secandum* medici, sic nos ad hoc genus castigandi rarò invitique veniamus, nec unquam nisi *necessariò* si nulla reperietur alia medicina." This was the motto of a pamphlet in which he says, "however, I may lament the many harsh terms that made their appearance in the last pamphlet, yet I think Mr. J. Wesley has but very little reason to complain, when we review the following specimen of some of the *mild epithets* which these two meek and loving gentlemen, Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, have conjointly given to the Calvinists:—*devil's factors—Satan's synagogues—children of the old roaring*



*hellish murderer who believe his lie—advocates for sin—witnesses for the father of lies—blasphemers—Satan-sent preachers—devils—liars—fiends.* These terms are taken out of different poems composed by those gentlemen, all of which, if I greatly mistake not, are still upon sale.” Wesley’s biographer, Watson, a great and good man, surely was not aware of these expressions when he called the publications of his party “models of temper, and calm but occasionally powerfully reproofing.” These epithets taken from Mr. Rowland Hill’s work would never have been introduced here, but that it has been very often insinuated that the *acid* was all on one side. Can any thing justify Wesley in setting forth an analysis of Toplady’s Treatise on Predestination in these words?—“The sum of all this:—one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand A. T.”—Certain it is that Mr. Rowland Hill and his friends never held doctrine such as this; never did persons more *freely* invite *all* to come to Christ, nor have any preachers, since the days of the Apostles, been more practical in their doctrines or holier in their lives. Mr. Hill passed through a life extended to almost eighty nine years, without a speck to stain his moral character; in this respect his sun careered in a cloudless sky, and sunk in celestial brightness into a world of glory. It is only to be lamented that the combatants did not *meet* instead of *writing*. They were inflamed by constant misrepresentations which lost nothing in passing from one to another. When they did meet, their mutual religion generally awakened a

common love towards each other. When Toplady saw Olivers, one of his most acute opponents, whom he had ridiculed in verse and attacked in prose; all his anger seemed to cease. "To say the truth," he writes, "I am glad I saw Mr. Olivers, for he appears to be a person of stronger sense and better behaviour than I had imagined." Mr. Rowland Hill, with admirable candour, says of his own writings "a softer style and spirit would better have become me;" and this would have undoubtedly been the case had they met and conversed. Mr. Hill also wrote to London and Bristol to forbid the sale of one of his severest publications, part of which, addressed *privately* to a friend had been printed without his consent:—"Thus" says he "have I done my utmost to prevent the evil that might arise from any wrong touches of the ark of God."

It is impossible not to notice in the Life of Mr. Rowland Hill, a controversy in which both he and his brother Richard appeared so prominent; and the quotations given from his own writings will, it is trusted, prove that he had the candour to censure the spirit in which, heated by polemical excitement, he had written upon such mysterious and hallowed subjects. The cause was the Lord's; but the armour in which both parties came into the field was not selected from the panoply of light. They therefore turned their weapons against each other, and forgot, for a period, the effect of such a spectacle on the enemies of their common salvation. Let the case be fairly stated, the faults on both sides be acknowledged, and may the remembrance of them serve as a warning to those who treat upon religious differences. Let us give credit to both parties for integrity of principle; and

let Calvinist and Arminian join in one common acknowledgement, that they never should have sought God by nature, had he not first sought them by grace; that the only way to eternal life is through the all-sufficient atonement of a dying Saviour; and the only evidence of our interest in his blood, a heart sanctified by his Spirit, and a life dedicated to his glory.

From Trevecca, where we left him to make this digression, Mr. Rowland Hill returned to Wotton, after, "in some measure, a happy ramble through Wales," and immediately visited, day after day, all the scenes of his former labours in Gloucestershire. There he had erected his house and a chapel, called the *Tabernacle*, in one of the most romantic situations that can be conceived, and very suitable to the complexion of a mind exceedingly alive to the picturesque beauties of nature. The celebrated Robert Hall once paid him a visit at Wotton, and said of it—"Sir, it is the most paradisaical spot I was ever in." Strong as was the expression, he did not say too much. Opposite the house is the most perfect amphitheatre of hill, three parts of which is clothed with a hanging wood, of exquisite variety of foliage, enclosing a dale of the richest fertility. The summit of a hill on the left of the house commands a landscape on which nature has lavished her choicest attractions. The Welsh Mountains, the Malvern Hills, the rich vale of Berkley, the broad course of the silvery and majestic Severn, and a foreground of grassy knolls and hanging woods, form the principal features of a scene in which all are blended in the loveliest harmony and proportions. In front of the house, a rocky path winding through a sloping wood of beech, breaks it with its white and narrow streaks

into clusters of great beauty and variety. On the sabbath this road teemed with human beings, coming from the lovely glens around, to hear the word of life from the lips of their beloved minister. About half an hour before service, he might be seen watching through a telescope his approaching flock, as they descended into the valley, and making his remarks to those near him on the seriousness or levity of their manner. Sometimes he gave a hint of the latter in his sermon, and they who were conscious of its application wondered how he knew it. Some of them used to say, "we must mind what we do, for Master Hill knows every thing, bless him."

But to resume the narrative. Mr. Rowland Hill went from Wotton to Bristol and Bath, where he was followed by congregations "larger than ever." "After three years' absence" he visited Devizes, and returned to Bristol, where he preached to great multitudes, both in places of worship and "out of doors." In his journey to London he passed through Worcester, Gloucester, and Birmingham, where he met with such a reception as gave him "much cause for thankfulness and joy." His route was very circuitous, and extended to the potteries in Staffordshire. He spent also a short time at Coventry and Northampton, and was much encouraged by his affectionate reception and the crowds who flocked to hear him. Preaching all the way as he journeyed, he at length reached London on the sixth of August. Here he at once resumed his labours, as appears from his journal. "London, Lord's-day morn, August 7th: an excellent sacrament at the Tabernacle. Afterwards preached in the same place to an overflowing congregation: *Behold I set before thee an open door.* Eve, to a vast multitude

in White Conduit Fields: *Father forgive them for they know not what they do:*" evidently in allusion to the opposition he met with. Not a day followed without a sermon; and on the Monday week after the last date, he preached at "Whetstone, on Christ's name being as ointment poured forth. Afterwards, a primitive feast, made sweet by prayer, singing, and exhortation. Afterwards expounded part of the 1st of Solomon's Song in the field. Tuesday, intended to have preached in London Fields. Prevented by rain; met society in the Tabernacle." The scenes of his ministry at this time were places of all kinds; churches, chapels, fields, gardens, the streets—in short, everywhere that he could obtain a hearing, every day of his life, and with great effect. One entry in his little diary at this time is—"Saturday, met society, and gave a general exhortation. Many this eve came to me under soul concern. Blessed be God, the work of grace still is carried on upon the hearts of many." On "Lord's-day, September 11th," he "concluded in London. Morn, chapel, on the great mountain, a plain before Zerubbabel. Eve, Tabernacle: *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted head above all: 1 Chron. xxix, 11.* On the same day £200 was collected for the public cause of Christ. The congregations in London continue as large if not larger than ever. A divine power in general went with the word. Most enlarged this time at Tottenham, and in the churches." From London Mr. Rowland Hill went into Gloucestershire, where he seems, from his diary, scarcely to have missed preaching a single day till his return

to London in December, where he concluded the labours of the year.

During the year 1774, Mr. Rowland Hill had the misfortune to lose his friend, Mr. Powys, of Berwick, whose death he felt very severely; the more so as there were but very few, in his own sphere of life, who appreciated his views of religion or approved his zeal. There was, however, one individual in particular, for whom he cherished the sincerest affection and regard. This was the excellent Sir Charles Middleton, afterwards well known as Lord Barham, whose management of the navy when first lord of the admiralty, in times of unequalled difficulty, will ever be mentioned to his honour in the pages of British history. His wise and prompt services were commended in the highest terms by Lord Nelson; and the navy of England reached the *acmè* of immortal fame, when a man, ridiculed as a *saint* and a *methodist*, presided over its affairs. Let this for ever silence those who assert that religion incapacitates for the uses of this life. But another point deserves to be mentioned. Lord Barham permitted no Sunday labours in the dockyards; yet he managed to comply with the urgent and rapid demands of the hero of the deep, whose circumstances and uncommon movements required no ordinary energy in the supply of his resources. Neither nations nor individuals will ever lose by the entire dedication of that sacred day, to the worship of a God who prospers those who serve him, and obey his commandments. When Lord Barham retired, in a good old age, to his seat in Kent, Mr. Rowland Hill paid him an annual visit. The affectionate and venerable old man often came to the door to welcome his arrival; and Mr. Hill used to say, nothing cheered him



more "than to see the silvery locks and heavenly smiles of the good old lord" as he stood to receive him under the portico of the house at Barham court. No visit afforded Mr. Rowland Hill more pleasure than this : they had known each other when they first set out in the paths of religion, and were drawing to the close of their pilgrimage, rejoicing in the light that had led them all the way.

Mr. Rowland Hill commenced the year 1775 at Woburn. His first sermon in London was in Aldersgate church. He was very regular in his attendance at the meetings of the society and classes at the Tabernacle. He also attended some "*Love Feasts*," which seem to have afforded him no great satisfaction, for he remarks on the first meeting of the kind this year, "Wednesday, a love feast at the Tabernacle; tolerable for a love feast." In the month of February he went to Brighton, where he spent about a fortnight in diligent preaching, and in gathering and forming societies of christians. He then paid a visit to Portsmouth, which occupied him till the end of the month. He had the greatest pleasure in labouring amongst sailors, and generally found his way to their hearts and affections. Many a sturdy tar that denounced his opening address with an oath, before the close of his solemn appeal had melted into tears ; and often did they fill the eye and drop down the rough cheek of some veteran, who, till touched with a recital of the Saviour's love and sufferings, seemed as hard and sapless as the oak which bore him on the bosom of that ocean, where without a thought of judgment or eternity, he had sternly perilled his life in the service of his country. Frequently did Mr. Hill experience the no very gentle grasp of

some sailor's hand who had been brought to a knowledge of the way of life by a sermon he had come to sneer at and oppose. Of his visits to seaports he used to say, "I was most affected by those who came about me, and told me in tears that I had led them to Christ last time I was there; this always touches me." When they abused, pelted, and threatened him, he stood calm, and unmoved; his countenance, capable of almost every expression, never assumed that of fear; but as soon as ever a person told him, in a way that removed all suspicion, of his having been the means of bringing him to God, he could never suppress his emotion. His courage, at all times remarkable, often awed his most violent opposers, and on one occasion frightened away two or three highwaymen, which probably gave rise to the foolish story of his taking a robber into his service. He was riding in a phaeton somewhere near London, accompanied by Mrs. Hill, when they were attacked in the dark by either two or three men, who violently demanded their money. They had a few minutes previously made a successful attack upon a Mr. Whitefoot, his assistant, who preceded them in a gig. When they came to Mr. Rowland Hill, and he used to laugh heartily, as he told the story, he set up such a tremendous unearthly shout, that one of them cried out, "we have stopped the devil by mistake, and had better be off"—on which they ran away and left Mr. Hill and his lady in peaceable possession of the road. He used to say "I stood up in the carriage and made all the outrageous noises I could think of, which frightened the fellows out of their wits, and away they scampered."

During this year Mr. Rowland Hill preached at many places in Kent without much opposition, but



had to encounter a desperate tumult, raised by a rabble in the street, at Maidstone. He briefly notices it—"Thursday (March 24th) Maidstone—*His fan is in his hand, he will thoroughly purge his floor.* Some persecution, people still within, but in a tumult without—*in tumults often.*" At Chatham his reception was quite the reverse of this, so that he remarks, "uncommon sweetness at Chatham." As his engagements multiplied, he grew weary of keeping a regular diary of his preaching, and says in one place—"from hence to my departure from London omitted to put down in order." After merely mentioning, as far as he could recollect, the texts he had preached upon, he adds, "Wednesday, April 19, 1775, after a long stay in and about London of four months, after some blessings, and many humblings, set out for Gloucestershire, reaching Reading on that evening, preached in the Independent meeting, *Unto him that hath loved us, &c.*—Thursday, Newbury, in the meeting house, on being perfect through Christ's comeliness put upon us."

On Saturday, April 22nd, he reached Wotton, and remained there till June 24th, preaching almost daily.

His retirement into the country was no repose to him; he preached as often there as in London. On a Sunday after the service of his chapel at Wotton he would give out such a notice as this;

"To-morrow evening meet the society."—"Any body here from Nibley?"—(a nod of assent) "Tell them I shall preach there Tuesday—Wednesday, preach here—Thursday, Wickwar—Friday, Uley—Saturday, must have some rest—Sunday here again God willing." After this notice, he not unfrequently forgot

the places where he intended to go, when Mrs. Hill's accuracy was of no slight service in aiding his memory. He often said at breakfast "where am I to preach to-day?"—and fortunate it was for himself and the people, that she had not forgotten the detail of his arrangements.

Mr. Rowland Hill had great reason to rejoice in the consistent lives and zealous devotion to God of many of his converts at Wotton. There was amongst them a person named Rugg, of a piety so deep and of a life so useful and unblemished, that even his enemies admired and were awed by his character. Mr. Rowland Hill used to say of him that he was one of the most complete christians he ever met with. He has been, however, mentioned here, because he was connected with an extraordinary fact, illustrative of God's care of his own people. Mr. Hill's gardener, at Wotton, who had always passed for an honest quiet sort of man, was at length discovered to have been the perpetrator of several burglaries, and other daring robberies in the neighbourhood, though he had, till caught in the fact, never been even suspected. He was tried at Gloucester, condemned, and executed. It need scarcely be said that his master visited him in gaol. During his interviews with him there, he confessed the many crimes of which he had been guilty. "How was it William," he inquired, "that you never robbed me, when you have had such abundant opportunity?" "Sir," replied he, "do you recollect the juniper bush on the border against the dining room?—I have many times hid under it at night, intending, which I could easily have done, to get into the house and plunder it—but, Sir, I was afraid; something said to me, he is a man of God, it is a house of prayer—if I break in

there I shall surely be found out—so I never could pluck up courage to attempt it.” In another conversation he told him, “Sir, I well knew that old Mr. Rugg was in the habit of carrying a deal of money in his pocket; times and times have I hid behind the hedge of the lane leading to his house—he has passed within a yard of me, when going home from the prayer meeting, again and again—I could not stir—I durst not touch so holy a man. I was afraid. I always began trembling as soon as he came near me, and gave up the thought altogether, for I knew he was a holy man.” This is a fact which well assures us that God *our sun* is a *shield* too.

In the year 1775, orchards, commons, gardens, churches, chapels, woods, hills and dales, were the varied scenes of Mr. Rowland Hill's daily exertions. Every now and then there appears also an entry in his diary, of a sermon at Kingston, his curacy, but there is no record of the time when he finally left it. He made this year a tour through great part of Devonshire, where his ministry produced a most powerful effect, and he spent a whole fortnight in great activity at Plymouth. Thence he proceeded to Launceston, and preached in the town hall, and, to use his own words, “Saturday, (no date, but it was in July) reached Bideford—the dissenting minister refused the pulpit before I asked for it—expounded thrice, and preached in the market-place.” Here he says “God's word ran, and was glorified.” On his return from this tour he remained at Wotton, till August 21st, when he set off for London, preaching every day on his journey. On his arrival in the metropolis he had the satisfaction to experience no diminution either in the number or the affection of his followers.

## CHAPTER V.

### *Remarkable conversions.*

DURING his residence in London, Mr. Rowland Hill not only preached in various places of worship, but expounded in families. He was in the habit of going occasionally for this purpose, to the house of Lord Robert Manners, between whose accomplished lady and Mrs. Hill there existed a long and sincere friendship.

He received, while in the metropolis in the year 1775, the usual tidings of the success of his itinerancy. On one of the letters conveying this information is written, "good news from Bideford," in allusion to an account which it contains of the remarkable conversion of an individual who had been a notorious opposer of the truth. "Indeed, sir," says his correspondent, "there seems to be a lasting impression left on the minds of many ; and as for Mr. —, the man I before mentioned, it does my soul good to converse with him ; and the order of his house is turned upside down, from a prayerless family to a praying one." From Northampton Mr. Ryland, junior, sent him, in a long letter, a list of persons converted under his ministry in that place, during three visits, with remarks

on their cases and progress in religion. These were very encouraging, and were some of them instances of the power of God in rescuing, by the instrumentality of his word, even those who appeared to be buried in the most hopeless depths of ignorance and sin. Mr. Ryland concludes by observing, "upon the whole, my dearest sir, I think you and we have vast reason to be thankful that God blessed you so gloriously among us : and I hope the Lord will make it a mean of endearing Northampton to you, and of inducing you to visit us oftener."

During the latter part of this year, Mr. Rowland Hill divided his time between London and Bristol. He left the latter city at Christmas, to assist in forming in London a society called "*Societas Evangelica*," whose object was to aid settled ministers in itinerating in their immediate districts. No other particular event seems to have occurred to him at this time : he pursued a regular course of daily preaching and labouring in his Master's cause, and opposition seemed gradually to decrease. He even received letters acknowledging the deep concern of the writers at having harboured an unkind thought of his motives, or used an opprobrious expression towards his person. One of them says—"I most ardently, most zealously, most sincerely ask your pardon for the many unknown offences towards you, for the opprobrious and scurrilous language, for the most bitter invectives with which I have treated your name and person, and for the trouble I give you in this my prolix epistle ; and likewise beg of you, in the name of the Holy One of Israel, to offer up your prayers for me, if you can possibly think me worthy ; and in requital for so great a blessing you shall possess mine, not only with my lips, but

with my heart." Notices also were perpetually placed in his hands as he was entering the pulpit, containing similar penitent acknowledgments, and desiring that public confession might be made to that effect. There were also often given him, just as he was preparing to preach, slips of paper, containing instances of conversions and of awful judgments, that he might make allusion to them in his sermons. Several of these were preserved by Mr. Hill, and were labelled "notices given me in the pulpit." The following is one of them:—"Dear sir, for your encouragement I send you this, not to exalt you, but to lay you low at the feet of Christ Jesus. A man of a small fortune married a young woman with a little money. In a few years, through their extravagance, they spent all they had, which drove him to such ways which made him a terror to his wife and father-in-law, the latter of which he was determined to murder, and he set out last summer on a Sunday with a full determination to do it. Agoing across White Conduit Fields while you were preaching, he stopped to hear you, and the Lord pleased to set the word home with power, and it entered into his very soul, and the lion became a lamb from that very moment. The Lord shewed him what a devil he was; so that his heart of stone became a heart of flesh, and he is now become the best of husbands, the best of fathers, and the best of sons-in-law; and as he was a terror to the neighbourhood, he is now become a wonder to all, and his father-in-law says he must be *in a trance*. I only send you this account, which you may indeed depend upon, and may the Lord encourage you still to go on—Amen. Be clothed with humility." When these notices were given him he used generally to read them aloud; and once an



impudent fellow placed a piece of paper on the reading desk, just before he was going to read prayers. He took it, and began—"The prayers of this congregation are desired—umph—for—umph—well, I suppose I must finish what I have begun—for *the Rev. Rowland Hill, that he will not go riding about in his carriage on a Sunday!*" This would have disconcerted almost any other man; but he looked up as coolly as possible and said—"If the writer of this piece of folly and impertinence is in the congregation, and will go into the vestry after service, and let me put a saddle on his back, I will ride him home instead of going in my carriage."<sup>1</sup> He then went on with the service as if nothing had happened.

New year's day, 1776, found Mr. Rowland Hill in London, employed in the foundation of the society last alluded to. In February, as appears from an extract in his brief journal, he left London, "after, upon the whole, seeing the happy establishment of *Societas Evangelica*, returned about the beginning of February to Gloucestershire; preached at Wotton on the following subjects." Here follow merely his texts, without any remarks. After labouring with his usual diligence in Gloucestershire for a short time, he paid a visit to his family at Hawkstone, to which he makes no other allusion than this: "During my stay at Hawkstone, preached on the following subjects—at Weston, before my father; *They that despised Moses' law, perished without mercy, &c. Eve, Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness.*" He remained with Sir Rowland Hill till the 6th of May, when he returned to London, preaching daily on his road. Vast crowds

<sup>1</sup> I once told him this story, and asked him if it was true—"Aye, that it is," he said, "true enough—you know I could not call him a *donkey* in plain terms out of the reading desk."



followed him every where, particularly to hear him out of doors at Blackheath, and other places in and near the metropolis.

After his summer labours in London, Mr. Rowland Hill returned to Wotton, where he remained diligent as usual, till September, when he departed on a long preaching excursion into Wales, and returned by way of Bristol. While at Bristol, he made a journey to Taunton to meet Sir Harry Trelawny, a young baronet from Oxford, and "found him," he says, "to all appearance, a most amiable and devoted youth." When Sir Harry was awakened to a sense of religion does not appear; but it is certain that he had become a very zealous and active itinerant preacher, which drew down upon him the displeasure of the heads of his college. He was most anxious for this interview with Mr. Hill, and accompanied him to Mr. Tudway's, at Wells, where they had much conversation upon the subject of religion, as well as consultations on the means of promoting its revival. Soon after they parted, Sir Harry wrote Mr. Rowland Hill a letter, which will illustrate the nature of their intercourse, and the position of the writer with regard to Oxford.

*Bridshed, Nov. 27, 1776.*

MY EVER AND VERY DEAR BROTHER,

I AM this evening, through the rich, free, and undeserved mercy of our triune covenant God, arrived safe at home.

Oh! my dear friend, since I left you I know still more how I loved you. I seemed as if I had not my coat on when I rode away from Wells. I have not passed waking *hours*, I believe, without reflecting upon you, and that not without desires of again tak-

ing sweet counsel with you and walking in the house of God as friends.

Indeed I love you so much that I have been afraid that the Lord would make a breach between us. Oh! may we ever unite in the strictest friendship and harmony, looking every moment unto Jesus, that best of all friends, as the supreme object of our love. Should we both remain till March on this side the grave, I hope to attend you through Cornwall, and enjoy much comfort in your company, my dear brother.

When I came home, I found, among others, a letter from Oxford, from the sub-dean of our college, in which I am genteelly dismissed from that society. After having said many things on the subject, and given his opinion decisively respecting my return, he says this—"When you consider all this, you will not be surprised at my expressing my most earnest wishes, both for your own sake, and for the sake of the place, that *you would never think* of residing in Oxford again."

Could you see the whole letter, you would see still greater reason to conclude with me that my way is made clear, and that Oxford is not intended to be my place of abode as an academy. Oh! for a more intimate fellowship and acquaintance with Jesus Christ the Friend and the Saviour. God grant me to feel more real love to him, and more ardent desires after him.

Now, dear, dear sir, pray for me, and write to me when you have leisure. May God make me thankful for my acquaintance with you.

I am, my much, very much beloved brother, your faithful, sincere, and affectionate friend in Jesus,

HARRY TRELAWNY.

Please to remember me in a christian manner to Mrs. Hill, and all friends. I hope I shall not be long without a letter.

Sir Harry Trelawny was at this time a very young man, and wrote and acted with all the fervour of youth. It cannot be doubted that he and others, when they entered the university, *consented* to place themselves under its discipline, and that, therefore, every irregularity was in fact a breach of their engagement with that body. The only excuse for their conduct, was the almost total dearth of vital religion which prevailed at that time. A similar line of conduct in the present day would be altogether inexcusable; and there is reason to believe that the career of Sir H. Trelawny would have been much more useful, had he passed in patience through his studies at Oxford and entered the church, of which his zeal and talents as a preacher, as well as his situation in society, would have rendered him in all probability a bright and useful ornament. When Mr. Rowland Hill advised others to follow a course similar to his own, he forgot that *he* was a sort of privileged person; that both his bodily strength and mental energy were incalculably beyond those of almost any other individual; and that the same tacit consent to *his* moving in an eccentric orbit, which he was gradually gaining, would not be granted to another, whose constitution of mind, powers of imagination, and long proved integrity of heart and purpose, had not become the subjects of equal notoriety.

It is a fault often to be lamented in modern biography, that while all the virtues of men of piety are blazoned forth as bright examples to follow, their failings are

seldom exhibited as beacons to warn us of the dangers of our course. It must therefore be candidly acknowledged that the venerable subject of these memoirs had, at this period of his life, fallen into an error which somewhat diminished his usefulness, and brought him into discredit with persons of influence. He was constantly in the habit of mixing up politics with his sermons, and of denouncing, in every place which he visited, the war with America; and this in such violent language that hints were given him of its being noticed. The agitation of this question also made the controversy between him and the Wesleyans, partly political and partly theological, and was the cause of serious evil. Whatever may be the opinions of ministers as to abstract political questions, their theme in the pulpit, and no other ought to enter there, should be Christ and him crucified.

In the year 1776 Mr. Rowland Hill had the gratification of seeing his brother Richard elected as the representative of his native county in parliament; a circumstance which brought them, when in London, into perpetual contact with each other. Mr. Richard Hill was chosen member for Shropshire, at six successive elections: in 1806 he resigned. Men of piety and zeal ever received a cordial welcome to his house; and he manifested, upon all occasions, an ardent desire to aid them in their endeavours to extend the knowledge of the Saviour. The very year in which he first entered the house of commons, Mr. Richard Hill defended, in a series of letters, the doctrines of Mr. Hallward, his brother's friend and correspondent before mentioned in this work. He afterwards published them in a pamphlet entitled *Pietas Redingensis* or Reading Piety. Mr. Rowland Hill's early friend

filled the curacy of St. Giles', Reading, from which it is well known he was displaced by Mr. Cadogan, on his succeeding to that preferment, but was afterwards entreated by him, in the most affectionate and penitential terms, to re-occupy the useful station from which he had been so unjustly removed. Mr. Cadogan concludes his invitation in these affecting words—"I should be obliged to you for an answer as soon as convenient, as you may be sure I shall make no other application till I have heard from you. I commend myself to your pity and prayers, of both of which I stand in great need; and hope you will believe me, though once a blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious, to be yours most faithfully and affectionately in Christ Jesus, W. B. Cadogan." This offer Mr. Hallward could not accept, as a friend had presented him to a living; but he visited the former scene of his labours, and continued with the people for several months.

This year Mr. Rowland Hill was deprived, by death, of his excellent friend Mr. Rouquet, whose constant and hearty welcome at Bristol had given a charm to all his visits to that city, and in whose church it will be recollected he preached his first sermon after ordination. He died in the 47th year of his age, on the 16th of November, 1776. Just before he expired, he exclaimed thrice "*I want to go home*," when his spirit winged its way to the mansion prepared for it in the unseen world of glory. He *went home*, and left many a poor pilgrim to weep over the loss sustained by the departure of such a guide in the way. None dropt upon his grave tears of more genuine grief than Mr. Rowland Hill, who briefly notices the event in his much neglected diary. His entry is,

“Monday, dear Rouquet died. Thursday, Trowbridge anniversary<sup>2</sup>—*Eat the fat and drink the sweet, &c.* Lord’s day morning, began my labours in Bristol. Morn, preached a funeral sermon at St. Werburgh’s, *Well done good and faithful servant, &c.* Eve, Tabernacle, on the same occasion—*I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, &c.* Tuesday, St. Nicholas—*I have finished my course, I have, &c.*”

The first of these sermons on the Sunday, or rather as much as he recollected of it, he published with the title, a “token of respect to the memory of the late Rev. James Rouquet; being the substance of a sermon preached in the parish church of St. Werburgh, in the city of Bristol, on Sunday, November 24th, 1776, by Rowland Hill, A.M., chaplain to the Countess of Chesterfield.” He was appointed chaplain to Melusina, Countess Dowager of Chesterfield, in September 1773, as appears from the instrument itself found amongst his papers. The sermon bears a strong and well expressed testimony to the excellence of Mr. Rouquet’s character, and the usefulness of his ministry: it is dedicated to the poor, amongst whom its excellent subject so diligently laboured, and who followed in weeping multitudes his coffin to the tomb.

Mr. Rowland Hill began the year 1777 at Bristol, where he remained after the death of Mr. Rouquet. He preached there nine striking and useful sermons, on the *whole armour of God*, a subject on which he always spoke with great originality and fervour. One of his favourite books was Gurnall’s *Christian Armour*, and he often recommended it. The remark of an old divine, that there is no armour for the back in

<sup>2</sup> This sermon Mr. Rouquet always preached.



the panoply of the christian soldier, was also frequently quoted and enlarged on in his sermons. "The believer" he used to say "never turns his back upon his foe." Then he would exclaim, "shew thy shining *breastplate of righteousness*, go forward, advance towards thy enemy, and God shall protect thee behind; he has promised it—*the glory of thy God shall be thy reward*." This last expression he gave with an energy and emphasis belonging to himself alone.

Mr. Hill began at this time to preach frequently to little children, whom he assembled on a Sunday for that purpose; and he had reason to believe that lasting impressions had been made on the minds of many of them. To us it seems extraordinary, that the idea of a Sunday school had never yet presented itself to any one of the pious men who were reviving the cause of religion in this country. Mr. Rowland Hill was extremely fond of children, and delighted in exhorting them to come to Jesus; and his little books for their instruction, as well as his hymns for their use, have ever been justly admired.

Mr. Rowland Hill was a diligent visiter of the gaol at Bristol, where he preached to the prisoners. He began, as has been before noticed, to visit prisoners at a very early period of his religious career, and his mode of addressing those unhappy creatures was peculiarly striking, and seemed at once to win the confidence even of the most hardened. He maintained, while conversing with condemned criminals, a solemn dignity of manner, with an admirable control over his feelings; but when he left the cell of darkness and misery, a painful reaction took place in his mind. After coming from Newgate, in London, where he had



visited some poor wretch who was going to suffer death, he would scarcely eat of any thing at dinner, and at its conclusion drew back in his chair to the wall near the window, quite absorbed in the solemn recollection of the scene of distress. If asked a question, he answered it in an absent manner, and every now and then muttered some indistinct expression, in reference to the painful subject which had taken such a hold of his benevolent and sensitive mind. All he has written of prison scenes was felt and experienced by him—and he drew the picture with painful fidelity to the horrors of human woe, derived from disobedience of the laws of God and man. His reflections on these occasions seemed to be of a twofold character—pity for the sufferers, and thankfulness for the striking contrast of his own situation to theirs. He would ejaculate in a solemn whisper—"condemned to die!—O my God, what a mercy to be kept from sin by the restraining grace of thy Holy Spirit." Those who knew him well will remember these moments of pensive thought, which he vented as though insensible of the presence of any other person. He occasionally seemed lost to all sense of the things of time, and was carried away from every earthly recollection by a current of thought deep and rapid, on the stream of which all the affections and purposes of his mind were borne far beyond the attractions of this vain and changing world of uncertainty, emptiness, and woe.

To trace Mr. Rowland Hill, at this period of his life, as we have done in the earlier stages of his ministry, would only carry us precisely through the same scenes as those we have already noticed; nor would it be easy, as he ceased to keep any regular journal of the places and subjects of his preaching. It is in-

tended also to insert in this memoir nothing but what is derived from authentic sources, or from his own papers. There was likewise little or no variation in his mode of itinerating: the only difference was a gradual diminution of the violent opposition he met with in his early days. When he left off entering his texts in a regular diary, he purchased a small bible which he had divided into two interleaved volumes; and in this found it more convenient to note the subjects as he preached from them. He began this early in 1777, and marked the portions of scripture which he brought before the people in the various places which he visited, till the year 1799.

The year 1777 Mr. Rowland Hill divided between Bristol, Wotton, and London, and preached probably as many sermons as in any year of his life. In October he wrote the little work, from which an extract has been already given, called "A Full Answer to the Rev. J. Wesley's remarks upon a late pamphlet, published in the defence of the characters of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and others, in a Letter to a Friend." However greatly it is to be regretted that the controversy should still have continued, it is impossible to read this pamphlet, without being struck with his candid spirit and acute reasoning upon facts, although there is much in it from which any man may fairly be allowed to differ. He says in the beginning—"The Lord rectify my former mistakes, and give me to write in the spirit of the gospel." "Still, however," he adds, in the next sentence, "if plain facts continue to bear hard upon Mr. Wesley, let it be remembered the fault is not mine." He certainly does produce some very striking ones to prove the truth of his statements in a former book, and to shew that whatever

Wesley's views of *perfection* might be, he was doubtless at some considerable distance from it himself. Mr. Hill was more particularly vexed at the attacks made by Wesley on the memory of Whitefield, and the character of his friend Lady Huntingdon; and these accordingly form the first and leading subjects of his letter. But Wesley, whom nothing escaped, had made severe remarks "upon young Mr. Rowland's" political preaching, and denounced his observations on the rights of the colonies as disloyal. This charge Mr. Hill rebuts in the strongest terms, and declares that both himself and his hearers are daily praying for blessings upon the king, peace upon the kingdom, and wishing, *as much as in them is, to live peaceably with all men*. He says besides, "from the pulpit and the press our characters are bespattered, and our sentiments most grossly misrepresented." We can only lament now, that any portion of a life so devoted to God should have been wasted in such a controversy as this. Here we shall take leave of the subject, to which it was necessary, in a faithful biography, to advert. The warfare perhaps was not without its uses; but the benefits derived from it were such as nature gains by the commotion of the elements in a storm, and not like those which the earth receives from the fertilizing and refreshing shower, or from the beams of the bright and genial sunshine of each warm and cloudless day.

Late in the year 1777, Mr. Rowland Hill records that he preached a sermon at "Mr. Toplady's chapel;" little thinking, probably, that he was during the following year, to lose him by the stroke of death, though it had been feared for some time past that his health was on the decline. There were few persons for whose

piety, character, and talents, Mr. Rowland Hill had a higher veneration; and the shades of difference of opinion, in some points, which existed between them, never obscured in the slightest degree the perfect sincerity of their friendship. The removal of Toplady was the prominent event affecting Mr. Hill in 1778. In other respects, his career was very similar to that of former years—an uninterrupted and energetic course of almost daily preaching. Mr. Toplady died on Tuesday, August 11, 1778; and on the 17th of the same month, his remains were conveyed from Knightsbridge, for interment in Tottenham-court chapel. In accordance with his expressed desire, that he might be laid in the sepulchre of the dead without any eulogy from the living, or the parade of an ostentatious funeral, the time of his burial was kept, as much as possible, concealed from the public. Still, from information which could not be prevented, thousands of persons attended at the ceremony; and Mr. Rowland Hill, unable to restrain the expression of his feelings, rose unexpectedly, and with an energy and pathos that commanded the breathless attention of the congregated multitude, delivered an unstudied, but not on that account less touching and beautiful address, on the excellencies of him over whom they were then assembled to lament. The power of his language on this occasion added to his reputation as a speaker; it also evinced the real feeling and piety of his heart, whence it came in all the glowing sensibility of the emotions by which it was agitated and impressed. The same evening he preached at the Tabernacle, on Jer. xxxii, 40, 41, evidently in allusion to the deceased, and the peculiar opinions of which he had been the champion; and

Mr. Matthews,<sup>3</sup> the friend of Toplady, employed the close of the day in writing him an account of the last moments of that eminent departed minister. His letter was as follows :—

REV. SIR,

I HAVE scarcely time to transmit you the following remarks and sayings of our dear departed friend, the Rev. Mr. Toplady. He was blessed during his late illness with great consolations, and almost an uninterrupted sunshine of God's countenance. His assurance of faith was steady and firm, like the basis on which it was built. He has frequently declared, "that he had not had the least doubt of his personal interest in Christ, for many months past." He told me very lately, that he was "the happiest man in the world." He said to a friend, "O how this soul of mine longs to be gone, like a bird out of a cage, to the realms of bliss; O that some guardian angel might be commissioned, for I long to be absent from this body."

When being asked by a friend if he always enjoyed such great manifestations, he replied, "that he could not say that there were no intermissions; for if there had not been, his consolations would have been more than he could have supported; but when they were abated, they always left such an abiding sense of God's goodness, and his being fixed upon the rock, that it filled his soul with joy and peace."

Another time, and indeed many days together, it was his declaration, "Oh! what a day of sunshine has

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Matthews was a most respectable and excellent bookseller, No. 18, Strand, and was much with Mr. Toplady in his last illness. He was, I have heard Mr. Hill say, the father of the celebrated comedian of the same name.

this been, I have not words to express—almost without intermission his presence has been with me ;” and then repeated various passages of God’s word, adding, “what a great thing it is to rejoice in death !” Speaking of Christ, he said, “his love is unalterable.” He was happy in declaring that the 8th chap. of the Romans, the 33rd and six following verses, “were the joy of his soul.” He often spake upon that passage of God’s word with great delight, and said, “Lord Jesus why tarriest thou so long ?” He used to say, “I find as the bottles of heaven empty they are filled again,” meaning, I suppose, the continual out-pourings of the Spirit with which he was favoured.

When he drew near his end, he asked, “Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven ?” And believing the doctrine of the ministration of angels to God’s saints, he said, “What can be the reason that the ministers of the gospel speak so little upon it ?”

A little before his departure, he was blessing and praising the Lord for giving him strength in helping himself, and understanding ; but added, “What was all this to his presence and the shining of his love to my soul ?” And cried out “the sky is clear, there is no cloud.”

Within an hour of his death, he called his servant, and said—“Can you and my friends give me up ?” she said, “We can, as the Lord is so gracious to you.” He replied, “Oh, what a blessing it is that my dear friends are made willing to give me up into the hands of my dear Redeemer, and to part with me. It will not be long before God takes me.” He added, “No mortal man could live, after God had manifested to him the joys that I have seen.” Many more glorious confessions passed from his lips, but time fails

me to enumerate them. I can only add, that his gain is the church's loss, and pray God to send more such able champions into his vineyard, that may be enabled to make as bold a stand for the defence of the gospel as he has done.

I hope, sir, you will pardon the incorrectness that you meet with, and excuse the hasty manner of drawing it up, being much straightened for time. May the Lord bless you and your ministrations, and grant that you and I may thus die the death of the righteous, and that our latter end may be like his. Which is the earnest prayer of

Your most obedient humble servant

in the best of bonds,

JAMES MATTHEWS.

Strand, No. 18, August 17th, 1778.

The Rev. Rowland Hill.

This interesting account of the comfort enjoyed by Mr. Toplady in the prospect of death, is a complete answer to all assertions to the contrary, which were too readily believed. A similar contradiction to these reports was given to the public at the time they were afloat; and Mr. Matthews was one of those who signed the published testimonial to the triumph of his faith, in the awful moment of separation from all the scenes and attractions of this material world. In 1779, Mr. Richard Hill addressed a letter to Mr. Wesley, calling on him, in a series of questions, to say whether or not he was the person who circulated any of the reports, which tended to cast a shade over the last moments of his friend, Mr. Toplady. He had previously made the same queries, anonymously, in the *General Advertiser*; and as Wesley declined answering



them without knowing their author, he now acknowledges that they came from him, and repeats them. Sir Richard Hill's own copy of this letter was amongst the papers of his brother, Mr. Rowland Hill, and on it is written, in the author's hand-writing, "to this Mr. John never made any reply; but two friends of Mr. Toplady's waiting upon him to know wherefore he had made such assertions, he passed by them, got into a coach that was waiting, and said, 'those that are for peace will let these things alone.'"

From this time to the period of the erection of Surry chapel, Mr. Rowland Hill continued his itinerancy in various parts of the kingdom. He paid frequent visits to his family at Hawkstone, when he always officiated in the chapel of the house, and in the episcopal chapel at Weston, where he used great fidelity, and took much pains in the selection of his subjects.

In the year 1779, Mr. Newton came to London, and commenced his ministerial duties there, in which, and in those of Mr. Romaine, Mr. Hill took a lively interest. It was through Mr. Newton that he became acquainted with the poet Cowper; and no one more deeply grieved over the painful gloom, which obscured an intellect as pure and enlightened as ever adorned a human being. He received much kindness and attention from Cowper, and always spoke of him with the greatest reverence and affection.

The crowds which followed Mr. Rowland Hill every where at this time were excessive, and his ministry was greatly blessed. Amongst those who profited by his preaching, were several persons who had amassed considerable fortunes, by diligence and integrity in business, and who were willing to consecrate

no small portion of their gains to the service of their Saviour. They moreover naturally desired to find some place of a permanent nature, in which the minister whom they loved might assemble them as his own congregation, and convey at the same time the truths of the gospel to a neglected portion of the metropolis. Mr. Rowland Hill had often preached in the open air, to vast multitudes in St. George's fields; and he used to say that at the time of the riots, in 1780, he had addressed on the momentous concerns of eternity, assemblies of nearly twenty thousand people. Many of these were so wrought on by his preaching, that they returned home to seek in retirement mercy from their God, forgetting political excitement in an all absorbing anxiety for the salvation of their souls. His own thoughts, as well as those of his friends, now turned towards St. George's fields, as an appropriate situation for a large place of worship; and it was at length determined to erect a building for this purpose which should be called Surry chapel. To further this object he found many willing and liberal contributors, who cheerfully consented to permit him to spend the summer months either in travelling, or in his delightful retreat at Wotton, and were content with such supplies during his absence as he should appoint. At this time, not only chapels in every part of the kingdom were freely opened to him, but a considerable number of churches in the country and in London. In the neighbourhood of the seat of his family, there were several clergymen who cordially welcomed him to their pulpits, and none more so than his zealous friend Mr. De Courcy the incumbent of the parish of St. Alkmond in Shrewsbury, where he preached many of his most effective sermons. He found also

clergymen ready to afford him their services at Surry chapel, particularly Messrs. Venn and Scott. The former of these excellent men came regularly from Yelling to assist him; and an annual exchange took place between Mr. Hill and the well known preacher at the Lock.<sup>4</sup>

It was determined to have the service of the new chapel performed according to the ritual of the church of England; and there were but few among the original promoters of its erection, who did not find in such spiritual forms of devotion, a suitable expression of the outgoings of their minds, in the public worship of God. The situation was chosen, not with reference to the advantages of place, but with the design of ameliorating the religious condition, and administering to the spiritual benefit, of one of the most depraved districts in the metropolis; and this not only by precept, but by the yet stronger influence of the pious and benevolent example, of those who formed the nucleus of the congregation. Mr. Rowland Hill's own design with respect to the chapel, was that its pulpit should be open to pious ministers of all denominations, and of every country. This sort of union was the point to which all the public actions of his life converged, and made him the zealous supporter of every institution, that drew together men of different religious communities into one common arena of action. The impulses of a benevolent disposition, much more than deep reflection, were the moving principles of his religious career; and he believed that things might be as he wished to see them. The light

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Scott's own remark on this exchange is—"after I had been a few years in London, I refused to preach irregularly, except as once in the year I consented to exchange pulpits with Mr. Hill of Surry chapel, that being the *stipulated condition* of his preaching a charity sermon for the Lock Hospital."

of love was so bright in his mind, that it overpowered the milder beams of deliberate calculation. This was so evident, that even those who differed most widely from him, never doubted for an instant, the perfect purity of his intentions, or the honesty of his opinions.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Surry chapel. 1782.*

THE first meeting to forward the erection of Surry chapel, was held on February 4th, 1782, at which Mr. Rowland Hill and several other persons, ministers and laymen, attended. It was there determined that the building should be placed in the most eligible spot, between Blackfriars' bridge and the obelisk, to be chosen by persons selected for that purpose. It was also agreed that the affairs of the chapel should be vested in trustees, but that Mr. Rowland Hill should provide and direct the ministers, *so long as he should preach agreeably to the doctrinal articles of the church of England, and did not give the use of the pulpit to any one who was known to preach otherwise.* Very liberable subscriptions soon raised the necessary funds; and amongst the names of the subscribers appears that of Lord George Gordon, for fifty pounds. The erection of Surry chapel received also the sanction of the managers of Mr. Whitefield's chapels, where Mr. Rowland Hill had so often preached, and they expressed an earnest wish to remain still upon the most amicable terms, and to assist one another.

The first stone of this well known place of worship, was laid by its future minister, on June 24th, 1782,

when he addressed the vast assembly present, on the words, *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste*, Isaiah xxviii, 16. He has marked against this passage in his interleaved bible, "1st sermon, Surry church, June 24,—82." No less than three other persons afterwards preached to the multitude around them. Very much to the annoyance of Mr. Rowland Hill, some individual, soon after the ceremony, published a sermon which professed to be the one delivered by him on the occasion. This he disclaimed in several of the daily papers; notwithstanding which, it was reviewed, as his, in some of the periodicals of the day, and amongst them in the *European Magazine*, in which both himself and his pretended production were ridiculed. This, as will be seen hereafter, he noticed severely in his preface to the sermon delivered at the opening of his chapel.

Although anxious of course to be much on the spot, during the erection of this important building, Mr. Rowland Hill did not neglect to pay a visit to his people in Gloucestershire, where there had flocked around him a band of converts, whose piety would have done honour to any church in any age. Religion was not then, as it is now, admired and courted by the world; but it was sneered at and despised, and those who were the subjects of its genuine influence were marked and avoided. This threw the real christian on his own resources; they were his all, and he experienced their inexhaustible power of giving inward comfort, and producing external fruitfulness.

The building of the new chapel in London was suf-

ficiently advanced in the summer of 1783, to allow it to be opened for public worship on the eighth of June. Mr. Rowland Hill selected for his text on that day the words — *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block; and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God: 1 Cor. i, 23, 24.* While the works were in progress, he had frequently spoken to many people drawn to them by curiosity, and his addresses on these opportunities were made very useful. Several persons also were converted by the sermon he had preached at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, some of whom came to him to declare the impression made on their minds, and to ask his advice. He used also to gather the little children together, when they came to play about the building, and after engaging their confidence by kind words, and by little presents of cakes and fruit, he would talk to them of Jesus in the simplest and most affecting manner. In the evening of the same day that Mr. Rowland Hill opened his chapel by the sermon just alluded to, Mr. Piercy preached another in the same place, and a very serious occurrence had nearly happened. The building being erected on a marshy soil, the foundation was considered by some persons insecure, and in the midst of the service a false alarm was given that it was yielding to the pressure of the crowd. Mr. Hill entered the pulpit, and endeavoured to persuade them that all their apprehensions were groundless, to prove which, he said, he should remain there till the last; and begged them to stay quietly in their seats. Notwithstanding this, a general rush took place, and many in their struggle to get out were much injured. Mr.



Rowland Hill was forced out by the pressure, and fell in the chapel yard, but providentially escaped any serious bruises.

The spurious production which was sent out as the sermon delivered by him on the day of laying the foundation-stone, induced Mr. Rowland Hill to publish the one he preached at the opening of Surry chapel. Many of his hearers also earnestly requested him to print it. Though not in the habit of writing or making notes of his discourses, he had on this occasion drawn up a copious outline of his address, to which he could allude, in the event of another attempt to palm upon the public a composition like the former. A person, too, had taken down the sermon in short-hand as delivered, and sent him a copy of it; and from these two sources he compiled his publication, which he prefaced by some severe and characteristic remarks, upon what had been said of him in the previous year, by the writer of the article in the *European Magazine*. He first corrected the inaccuracies into which they had fallen, as to his personal history and adventures. He next made the following observations upon their censures of his doctrine:—  
“And as they are pleased to give the public charitably to understand that my methodistical doctrines of grace are ‘*hostile to morality, tend to overthrow the duties of good citizens, and the virtues of good men,*’ I could almost find it in my heart to ask them to explain to the public our enthusiastical notions of grace; and I dare say they would soon discover that they know no more what they write against, than poor Quixote knew what he fought against, when he fought with the wind-mill.” The title of the sermon is, “Christ crucified the sum and substance of the scriptures,” and most strik-

ingly does it illustrate the great scriptural doctrines of the divinity, incarnation, atonement, and exaltation of Christ, and the sanctification and comfort of his church. It concludes with a plain but excellent remark on the happiness arising from religion. "Fancy not that you lose your pleasures when you lose your sins, and that living to God will be an irksome task: no, blessed be God, thousands can declare that they never knew what it was to be redeemed from misery, till they were redeemed from sin. My whole soul prays that God would make you of that happy number. Even so be it, Lord Jesus. Amen."

The management of the affairs of Surry chapel was, as has been before mentioned, vested in trustees;<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Rowland Hill had the satisfaction to see his brother Richard at the head of the directors of the concerns of his new and respectable congregation. Surry Chapel has been the scene of many a remarkable event in the religious occurrences of the age, and of very numerous and striking conversions. Both the organ and singing have long been celebrated; and some, attracted there simply by a desire to hear its music, were caught in the net cast by its vigilant and zealous minister, and became numbered with its most active, liberal, and constant friends. Once, however, Mr. Rowland Hill had a narrow escape from the iniquitous design of some miscreant, who fired at him while in the pulpit, through one of the low windows next Blackfriars' road. The report was heard, and the ball, or other hard substance, passed to the left of

<sup>1</sup> The original trustees were Sir Richard Hill, Rev. Rowland Hill, Messrs. Joseph Simms, John Keysall, Edward Webster, Thomas Wilson, Samuel Lloyd, William Lloyd, John Bush, James Neale, James Webber, Thomas Briknell, George Smith, Ambrose Martin, John Clarke. All these have passed into another world except Mr. William Lloyd, who dined with his venerable minister and the other trustees only a few weeks before his death.

the pulpit, through the window near the organ, which it broke. The individual who attempted this diabolical act was never discovered, nor did he repeat it; and whenever Mr. Hill mentioned the circumstance, he always expressed his thanks to providence for delivering him from so great a danger: for had not the substance aimed at him risen in its projection, it passed so directly over him, that there was every reason to fear his long and valuable life would not have been spared.

In the autumn of the same year in which his chapel in London was completed, Mr. Rowland Hill lost his father. Sir Rowland Hill died August 7th, 1783. By this event he obtained some accession of fortune, which he much needed, as the income he derived from his chapels at Wotton and London never, in any one year of his life, covered his expenses upon them. Of the proceeds of Surry chapel the trustees paid him only £300 a year, and out of that, he boarded the whole of the supplies who occupied the pulpit, during his absence in the summer. The rest of the receipts went towards the support of the chapel, and to the aid of the numerous charitable institutions connected with it, to which Mr. Hill always was a munificent contributor from his own purse. Some person once said of him, "Rowland Hill must get a good annual sum by his chapels and travelling"—which coming to his ears, he remarked—"Well, let any one pay my travelling expenses for one year, and he shall have all my gains, I promise him."

Though Mr. Rowland Hill supplied the pulpit at Surrey chapel, while absent, with ministers of various denominations, his chief delight was in getting it occupied by his old clerical friends, Pentycross, Ber-

ridge, and Venn ; and when he could no longer obtain help from the church it gave him no little disquietude. Probably no place of worship has been the source of more institutions, for promoting the glory of God and the welfare of man, than Surry chapel. One of the first, begun in 1784, was its benevolent society for the relief and personal visitation of the sick poor. There were a number of pious and judicious members of the congregation to whom this duty was entrusted, and who were willing to devote themselves to the work. Thus whenever a doubtful application was made to Mr. Rowland Hill for relief, he asked for the person's address, and answered, "I will have the case visited;" and before many hours had elapsed, some of the visitors of the society had either relieved the distressed family, or detected the intended imposture. Accounts of the most striking cases of want, that had occurred to these truly christian philanthropists, were read annually from the pulpit, and a collection was made for the supply of the society for the ensuing year. There were attached, moreover, to the chapel, no less than thirteen Sunday schools, containing above three thousand children ; and from this source, there have been supplied to the heathen world, several valuable and efficient missionaries. More devoted teachers, than those who undertook the gratuitous superintendence of these children, have never been found in any similar institution.

The contributions of Mr. Rowland Hill's congregation to the cause of missions were immense ; and the annual meeting of the London missionary society, which took place within its walls, was one of the most striking sights of the kind to be seen in the metropolis. There was also a female missionary society

which contributed about one hundred pounds annually to this cause.

One of the most interesting appurtenances of Surry chapel, is a neat gothic building in the borough, the centre of which is appropriated to a school of industry for twenty-four poor girls, who are both clothed and educated. Its wings contain alms-houses for the same number of poor women, who are allowed, in addition to a comfortable room and a sufficient supply of fuel, four shillings a week towards their support. The only qualifications necessary for a candidate, on a vacancy, were distress, and a christian character. The person applying must have been seven years a regular attendant of the sacrament at some place of worship, and was required to bring testimonials of her consistent conduct from the minister.

In addition to the institutions already mentioned, there were formed, by members of this religious community, a Dorcas society for the relief of poor married women, and a clothing society for the supply of the needy, at very reduced prices. It may be said of these societies, that though the machinery by which they were worked was somewhat complicated, the objects they had in view were admirably effected by them ; and the reason of this was, that those to whom their management was committed, were persons who, by evident proofs of real piety and zeal, had gained the confidence both of their pastor and the flock in general.

Mr. Rowland Hill formed at Surry chapel a religious society peculiarly his own, with the articles of the church of England as its standard of doctrine. Converts who gave him satisfactory evidence of their sincerity, were admitted into the society, and their

names enrolled as admissible to the table of the Lord ; a custom not unusual in dissenting communities. He was a warm advocate for prayer-meetings, which he constantly attended ; but no person prayed in his presence, unless called upon to engage in this sacred exercise by himself. He considered that much benefit arose from them, in the increase of a spirit of piety and brotherly love ; but late in life, he admitted that they were not without their attendant evils, and wished he had considered by what means he could have so managed as to have made them the channels of more unmixed usefulness. Still he was of opinion that, on the whole, great good resulted from them. The question, by what mode of meeting his people, in addition to the common assemblies for regular worship, a minister can most effectually promote their growth in religion, and become acquainted with their state of mind, without engendering spiritual pride in some, and jealousy in others, is well worthy the consideration of those who have had the longest experience upon such subjects. The most laborious and intelligent of the clergy have found the greatest difficulty in deciding on the best way of thus managing the private discipline of those who have received spiritual benefit from their preaching.

To distinguish *public* from *social worship*, in which a layman may officiate in the presence of his minister, is a very favourite theory with some good and zealous persons. The evils resulting from this custom amongst dissenters, have long been visible in the dictatorial direction of what the precise views of their several ministers *must* be, and in the want of a teachable spirit in receiving their instructions, as well as of a willingness to be guided by pastoral authority

and influence. For a clergyman to permit and sanction such a proceeding, is scarcely consistent with the proper discipline and order of the church; and is, to use the judicious language of Mr. Scott, an "irregularity which cannot be justified to our diocesans or others." Besides, any thing which tends to make men undervalue the appointed usages of public worship, conducted solely by the authorized minister, is an evil which no good, arising from other modes of bringing the professedly religious together, can ever possibly counterbalance.

After the erection of Surry chapel, Mr. Rowland Hill became the minister of a regular congregation, with a settled residence in London. He was not, on this account, less mindful of the former scenes of his labours. There existed no jealousy between him and the managers of Tottenham-court chapel and the Tabernacle, in which he had so often preached, and where he had been the means of very numerous conversions. The recollection of his early preaching in these places was cherished by him to the end of his days, with a happy retrospect of the ease with which he spoke, and the crowds who attended his ministry. In the last sermon he ever preached, delivered on March 31, 1833, he said, "Oh! my dear brethren, I almost wish to be made young again; if I could but see such days, as when I first came and preached at Tottenham-court chapel, and was in the habit of preaching in the streets and lanes for want of room. Oh! how I love to recollect what I then felt."

When Mr. Rowland Hill entered upon his residence in St. George's Fields, they wore an aspect far different from their present appearance. All about him, especially between his house and the Westminster road,



was nothing but a marshy swamp, and the turnpike gate which now opens upon it, near the house of bishop Bonner, was called the Marsh Gate. Here he was content to live and labour for the Lord, and to be the scorn and ridicule of the world, for the sake of promoting, by what he conscientiously believed to be the most efficient means, the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom.

At this period of his life, though opposed by innumerable enemies, and treated with unsparing censure by a portion of the press, Mr. Rowland Hill had many comforts. Sir Richard Hill, now the head of his family, was a frequent attendant at Surry chapel, and a kindred spirit even in his lively and witty turn of mind. While one brother was preaching daily in all places, and at all times, the other was not ashamed to quote in the senate, from what he denominated "a now-a-days obsolete book called the bible," nor ever lost an opportunity of publickly avowing his religious opinions. His house also was open to the leading revivalists of the day; and he was one of the very few who had the courage, in the midst of the rank and fashion with which his situation, style of living, and fortune, surrounded him, to declare that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and of its faithful and despised ministers.

The year after he opened Surry chapel, Mr. Rowland Hill had not only the satisfaction to see his elder brother again returned to parliament as the representative of the county of Salop, but his brother, Mr. John Hill, was also elected member for the town of Shrewsbury. He continued to sit in parliament till the year 1796, when the borough was contested with him by his relation, the honourable William Hill, now

Lord Berwick, who succeeded, and was returned together with William Pulteney, Esq. In 1805, however, Mr. John Hill was re-elected for Shrewsbury, and Sir Richard for the county. On the dissolution in 1806, they both retired together from parliament.

At this time also, Mr. Rowland Hill had many churches open to him, both in London and in the country; but the two perhaps in which he most delighted were that of Mr. Cadogan,<sup>2</sup> Reading, and St. Alkmond's, Shrewsbury. De Courcy, the minister of the latter, was originally a *protégé* of John Wesley, and is highly commended by him in a letter to Lady Maxwell; but he had withdrawn himself from Wesley's advice and Arminian doctrine. He was a man of great power as a preacher, and was made very useful.

Just at the period which now engages our attention, it is well known that the plague of infidelity, which had infected a great part of the continent of Europe, became an awful moral epidemic, destroying the present comfort, and blighting the best prospects of thousands in this country. Satan seemed to be gaining a direful ascendancy; and but for the few lights scattered here and there in our land, who upheld the scriptural purity of the church's doctrines, we should, to all human appearance, have been involved in the same gloom, and horrified with the same appalling deeds of darkness that desolated a neighbouring nation. God, however, in mercy provided for us an antidote to these evils; and if ever there was an illustration of the truth, that the *holy seed* is the substance and bulwark

<sup>2</sup> In a letter addressed to a near relative of mine Mr. Cadogan writes—"I am happy to inform you that Mrs. Cadogan is a great deal better, and in full expectation of seeing you with Mr. and Mrs. Hill on Tuesday next. Pray give my love to them, and tell them that we shall depend upon seeing them, and that I shall give out the Rev. Rowland Hill to preach on Tuesday evening." This letter was dated April 14th, 1789.

of a land, it was in our own case. In London and in other parts of the kingdom, there were here and there planted men, who lifted up the standard of the cross against the enemies of the truth; and some of them lived to witness the wide-spreading influence of those doctrines which they had fearlessly inculcated in days of error, ignorance, and unbelief. Full homage has been paid to their memory, and their works are following them.

In the midst of his other engagements Mr. Rowland Hill never forgot his flock at Wotton, nor his faithful followers at Bristol and in Wales, where his journeys were eminently prosperous. In the principality, wherever he went, he was followed by multitudes. He would seize the opportunity of the noontide rest from labour, to gather around him the peasantry of the mountains; and in the evenings of summer, thousands would congregate on the side of some romantic hill, after a walk of many miles by rugged and steep paths. He could not speak Welsh, but those in that country who can understand English are exceedingly fond of hearing preaching in our tongue. The Welsh preachers will tell us their language is the most expressive in the world, and from its being *perfect*, there is no doubt it was that which our first parents spoke in paradise! Still the Welsh are so *perverse*, that they delight in hearing English preaching, for which they were, on one or two occasions, severely and quaintly rebuked by their famous Howel Harris. Much, however, as they like English in Wales, when in England they delight in the accents of their native tongue; and when any eminent Welsh minister happened to be in London, Mr. Rowland Hill used to invite him to preach a Welsh sermon in Surry chapel. On such occasions hundreds of natives of the

principality, who were employed in the gardens near the metropolis, would assemble : and the numbers not unfrequently amounted to a congregation of two thousand, forming a very interesting spectacle.

While Mr. Rowland Hill thus used every means in his power to spread the knowledge of the truth at home, his zeal was not confined within the limits of his native country. He desired to lend his aid in enlightening the whole world, and grieved over the chains and darkness of the poor negro slave. A proof of this is to be seen in the following letter to him, from a pious and devoted Moravian missionary, written long before the institution of those societies which will ever form the brightest jewels in England's shining diadem of fame and honour. It shall be given in its original broken English ; and will be read with admiration of the simplicity and piety of its author, and of the account he gives of the result of his labours amongst the negroes in Antigua.

*Antigua, July the 27, 1785.*

MY VERY DEAR SIR, AND BROTHER IN CHRIST,

I resivet your very kind letter by Captain Keyser. I shame myself for that houner you wrote to me, because I am of the lower sorte peoble in the world, and even a German man, which cannot speak proper English (tho' the neger understand me.) As you then, worthy sir, has wrote me such a feeling letter, and with such a kind impression, so then I will make my poor answer to you so good I can, and you will be so kind and except of it. I am now here more than 16 year, sendet from my brethern callet the Unitas Fratrum, from Amerika ; callet Bethlehem the place where I came to the congregation, and I am now

more than 30 year with the brethern. A smal beginning was made here since the year 1759, but not much progress whas at this time, while several of our brethern diet. But then as our dearest Lord has given me the grace to be amongst them, so my doing was nothing, but the sufering and death of our dear Seviour, and what it has cost him to redeem us from death, devil, hell, and sin ; so as I have found forgiveness of my sins, and grace in the wounds of Jesus. This then has enderet<sup>3</sup> in there hearts, and broke there strong and brass hearts, and has brought them to the knowledge that have the souls do,<sup>4</sup> which our dear Lord and Seviour has redeemet with great pain and smart. This has stirrt up there sinful hearts, and came changet more and more, and so the poor blak became so eager to hear the word of God, and to hear from our dear Seviour ; and so many as come obdient to the gospel so they become christians, loving him who has redeemet us, comen obiedens to there owners, and faithful peoble in all respect, who thus truly belief in Jesus Christ our Lord.

When I came here 16 years ago, there was about 14 baptiset negero, but since this time it has increaset in baptism do<sup>5</sup> 3,000 negro by site what is baptiset by the enmistors<sup>6</sup> of the English church. There number is even larch, but them what is baptiset by us they have there pertikler [instruction] to speak faifatly<sup>7</sup> with them. The missioners which is placet here with me, the man with the negro man, and the missioners wifes with the negro women, and that is a great work, and that is every month, one month with the baptiset ones, and the other month with the candidates for baptism, and a great many learners which comes and

<sup>3</sup> entered.<sup>4</sup> that the souls do have.<sup>5</sup> to.<sup>6</sup> ministers.<sup>7</sup> faithfully.

goes that we callet new peoble. By them we only see how the grace of our dear Lord thus affectet their heart, and wait to be comfortet. Others even who comes to the meeting, and has not done with the world and the sin, they go away again from us. So by the negro we can say, the kingdom of God is like a net which is cast in the sea, and all sorte fish it cadges<sup>8</sup> good and bat, so the good ones is to be savet and the others thrown away. Otherwise we have most every evinning meetings, and so on Sunday for<sup>9</sup> and afternoon, fornoon is preaching, and in the afternoon there are the quarter meeting we callet, first the new peoble, then the candidats for baptism, and then the baptiset. Then every meeting has there own instruction such as is suitable to them, them with each class muss speak to their circumstances that is comen to the class where they are in.

I have wrote<sup>1</sup> your letter to the baptiset negro, and told them how a gentelman in London, who has a larger congregation as we are, has such an esteem for the work of God in Antigua amongst the poor negro, and thus pray for us [that] they may love God from all there heart, and all there soul and mind. So then they sigh. I asket them if I shall salute this good gentelman from them, and if they will pray for him likewise? So they all with one voice saying, yes master, give our hearty love to that good gentelman; we also will pray for him so good we can. It was indeed a moving amongst them.

Certainly, dear sir and brother, when the grace of our dear Lord changet there heart, then they become *comelines*<sup>2</sup> unto our Lord Jesus Christ as you write; and when we seem them and feel how the grace of

<sup>8</sup> catches.    <sup>9</sup> fore.    <sup>1</sup> read.    <sup>2</sup> comeliuiness.

our Lord works on there heart, and in the meeting, we faifatly speaking, see the tear trinkling down from there sheekes, for longing to love our dear Seviour, who soferet and diet for us—when we see this and feels this from them, then we cannot be otherwise but love them, and spend there life with them; but they are a stiff-naket<sup>3</sup> peoble, and great hipocrites, but the grace of our dear Lord has meltet many hearts, and that comforts us in our work.

You writes from your hounable B. in-law, if we at this site keep meeting? I have inquired by gentelmen here who knows Mr. Tudway's estats, and that is on Barham town and thereabouts; we have not as yet kept meeting on this site, neither we have there. This time we have two congrigations here, one St. John's which whas the first and largest, and the other Gracehill, which is a of-spring<sup>4</sup> of St. John's, near Fallmuth,—ten miles from here to south east, then to south-west, where is near 900 baptiset people, there we should lay on the 3ter<sup>5</sup> congregation, which is about 6 miles from here. We have first our mind on 2—3 akker of land there from a gentelman of his estate, but he resides in London, a young gentelman. He was expectet out this year, but is not come, he has not quite his age, his name is Francis Fry, but is expectet the next year out, and if please God that good gentelman's heart will grant us this favour, with a pease of land from his estate, God will bless him for it, while it is for God's sake, and the poor negro slaves. Then I must build again, and if our dear Lord spare me my life, and I am well, I shall be glad for it. If then another door shall be openet, and the hounerable Tudway will help us at this site, which we

<sup>3</sup> stiff-necked.<sup>4</sup> offspring.<sup>5</sup> third.



callet the windward site, that is to the eastert, we shall be very thankfull. But, dear sir and brother, we are poor peoble, we have nothing in this world, our time we have here we spendet to the poor negro, and we are providet by our brethren at home, for all our necessary matters outwardly, and when we ever lay on a new place, our dear brethern at home, that is in Germany and Amerika, supscribe by collection from the congregation every where for the Headen missions, and by them we are supportet for building and our outwarte wants.

Now then, worthy belovet sir and brother, what you wish in the end of your letter, that all glory and thanksgiving will be given to God and the lamb, and that out of all nation shall be gatherith together, and shall praise and thank him for ever. That the lamb of God has taken away all sin, and has washt our garment white in his own blood. I join with you in this, and hope to see us on that happy place for ever, and ever, amen. Though unknown here, but in spirit are one even on earth, and therefore we love one another while he has lovet us and gave his life, and shet his blood for us. Please to give my humble respect to your lady, the hounerable Mr. Tudway and his lady, and all with you who loves Jesus Christ in sincerty, and all well wishers and all friends to the gospel, amen. So thus all my fellow lebrors<sup>6</sup> with me, which works in the vineyard of our Lord, and the poor negro thus the same with us, and I am with much love and esteem to your worthy person, though unknown to your most affectionate humble servant, and poor brother,

PETER BROWN.

<sup>6</sup> labourers.

From the interest Mr. Rowland Hill took in the success of this pious missionary, we may trace the first movement towards the great exertions, which he afterwards made, to send the gospel to the remotest regions of the earth. The wonderful efforts of Brown in Antigua had reached his ears, and excited an increased love for the missionary cause. Antigua, as is evident from his Village Dialogues, was long and often in his thoughts; and indeed the numerous conversions and zeal of the poor negros in that island, were calculated to awaken in every pious breast, a fervent longing for their souls, and pity for their wrongs. Towards enlarging their place of worship, the poor slaves, at each evening meeting, brought stones and other materials with them, and worked diligently at the task of providing more extensive accommodation for the worship of their God: cheerfully completing their toil by voluntary labours at the close of those which were forced on them during the day. By accounts such as these, Mr. Rowland Hill's benevolent mind was stirred up by degrees to extensive exertions on behalf of heathen nations; and by his zeal and energy at home, he became one of the most unvarying holders of the cord that supported the machine, in which the first missionaries of the present day descended into the depths of the unexplored, idolatrous, and wretched recesses of the heathen world.

It has been often objected to the zealous promoters of missions, that they aid them at the expence of those who have a prior claim to sympathy in their own land. It is an unjust accusation. Those who shine brightest in their own sphere reflect the most light to a distance; and indifference to the cause of the heathen is generally accompanied by negligence at home.

No one cared more for his people and fellow-countrymen than Mr. Rowland Hill; and this he proved by indefatigable exertions while residing with his different flocks, and by unceasing endeavours to obtain, when absent, such supplies as would administer unto them in all diligence and gospel sincerity. When writing, soon after the erection of his chapel in London, to Mr. Burder, he tells him, "the poor sheep left in the country are near my heart," and begs him to occupy his place while he visits them. He also describes himself in his droll manner, as "rector of Surry chapel, vicar of Wotton-under-edge, and curate of all the fields, commons, &c. throughout England and Wales." One of his most favourite substitutes, when away, was Mr. Venn, of Yelling;<sup>7</sup> whose assistance he the more valued on account of his being a beneficed clergyman. Mr. Venn, however, in occupying Surry chapel pulpit, forgot the due observance of ecclesiastical discipline and order. He felt, no doubt, that the doctrines were those of his own communion, and the service the same. Still it was an act of irregularity contrary to canonical rules, and therefore not advisable even in those days; but he was a man of admirable piety and zeal. The following letter from him will much interest those who view with delight the spread of religion in the university of Cambridge, and the inconceivable blessing that has long accompanied Mr. Simeon's ministry there.

*Yelling, Jan. 31, 1786.*

DEAR SIR,

About a fortnight since, I received yours, dated the 21st of Dec. Much am I indebted to my

<sup>7</sup> The author of the *Whole Duty of Man*.

christian brother for remembering me before the throne of grace. The God who healeth hath heard their prayers for me, and I am in such health, that provided I can get a supply, and it may be agreeable to you, I purpose making the experiment of preaching for you at Surry chapel in April, beginning the Sunday after Easter, for eight Sundays. But I shall not be able to do more than preach *twice* on the sabbath; not on a Tuesday. If it please our adorable Master that I come, I will be sure not to overwalk myself, and take the best care I can not to exceed either in length, or in exertion of voice. At home you may suppose there are strong objections against making the attempt; but were I sure to suffer in body, if your hands in the glorious work may be strengthened, and opportunity given for you to spread the gospel, or visit and confirm those who have received it, I hope I should not shun making the trial. If it please God my brother Gambier is alive, I shall be so much at his house, and my son's-in-law, and other friends, that I shall seldom be a lodger at your house.

You will be agreeably surprised when I tell you I preached in exchange for dear Simeon at Trinity, to many of the gown, and afterwards in the evening to a company at Mr. Musgrave's, and on Wednesday evening at your old friend Mrs. Bunn's. Indeed there is a pleasant prospect at Cambridge. Mr. Simeon's character shines brightly. He grows in humility, is fervent in spirit, and very bountiful and loving. Isaac Milner<sup>8</sup> kept an act in the schools, Dec. 15th last, on justification by faith *only*. His thesis was forty mi-

<sup>8</sup> Late dean of Carlisle, master of Queen's college, Cambridge, and continuer of the History of the Church, begun by his brother.

nutes, and admirable. The pit could not contain the masters of arts, and a greater number there was of students than has been seen there for years. I went over on purpose; and I doubt not good will come from it. Jonathan Edwards's works are now called for; and, what is remarkable indeed, the professor of law (Dr. Jowett) and the three first mathematicians in the university confessedly, Milner, Coulthurst, and Farish, are all on the side of the truth. Lift up your prayer, that they may feel, and live, and work, for Christ, and the salvation of souls. There are twelve students promising to come forth in the service of our Lord. I have heard also of an excellent minister near Chester. His name, Nicholson. When the bishop ordained him (though he was never at college) he was so much superior in scholarship, and his knowledge of divinity to the rest, that the bishop took great notice of him, and when alone, told him, "I have had many complaints of you as a *Methodist*; but go on and prosper, and God bless you."

Mrs. V. joins with me in wishing Mrs. Hill and yourself all increase in spiritual blessings.

From yours sincerely in Christ,  
H. VENN.

To add to Mr. Rowland Hill's delight at these tidings, Mr. Venn again writes, in a letter dated "Yelling, March 23rd, 1786." "On Sunday last, Mr. Simeon and I exchanged. There were more than twenty of the gown to hear. In the evening I spoke to eighty in a house. The prayers offered up for our poor university are regarded. Two of the first amongst the bachelors of this year promise well. So great is their character, that instead of ridicule and spiteful

sneers, the profane youth choose to avoid the subject of religion, lest they should be fairly out-argued. I have now been twice at Cambridge, and both times have had my heart much warmed with what I have seen and heard. How delightful the prospect, that when we old and worn out servants and soldiers shall be called out of the field, others are entering in, who will do valiantly under the banner of our dear general, who has died for us. Mr. Simeon's light shines brighter and brighter. He is highly esteemed, and exceedingly despised; almost adored by some; by others abhorred. O what numbers, if the Lord will, shall come out from Cambridge in a few years, to proclaim the glad tidings!"

Such news as this would deeply affect him to whom it thus came. The gospel he preached in the university to the poor, despised, and humble followers of his steps, now influencing the lives, opinions, and characters of the first men in Cambridge! What an assurance would this afford him, of the reality of the impressions of his younger days! He had always the highest respect for the characters of those individuals mentioned by Mr. Venn, and spoke of Mr. Simeon's invaluable labours with the sincerest delight, though he well knew that he disapproved all irregularity in a clergyman's administrations. Indeed, there is every reason to believe, that the observance of *order*, which has been so judiciously regarded by Mr. Simeon and his followers at Cambridge, has tended greatly to promote the influence of numbers of the zealous clergy, who are now so vigilantly and successfully defending the best interests of the church. On one occasion, Mr. Rowland Hill, with his usual delicacy of feeling, refused to preach in a dissenting place of

worship at Cambridge, lest he should appear in any way to interfere with the course so wisely pursued by Mr. Simeon, whose incalculable usefulness will never be fully appreciated, till the day in which the unostentatious followers of the Lamb shall be rewarded in the presence of the assembled universe.



## CHAPTER VII.

### *Sunday schools.*

THE Sunday schools attached to Mr. Rowland Hill's chapels were amongst the earliest established in this country. The one at Surry chapel commenced in 1786, and was cordially supported by him during his whole life. Its teachers were selected from the most pious, active, and intelligent members of the congregation, who conducted its affairs with the spirit and faith of prayer. Those who were engaged in that interesting work of christian love, will ever remember how he used to come into the school-room on a Sunday afternoon, to converse with the teachers, and encourage or rebuke the children, as the case required. The silence which took place on his entrance, was not that of uneasiness or impatience at his presence, but a pleasing expectation that some word of comfort or advice would fall from his lips, to refresh and stimulate them in their holy occupation. Mr. Hill's mode of encouraging the children who were distinguished for their diligence and good conduct, was singularly happy, and seldom failed to leave a salutary impression on their minds. His power of reproof to offenders was extraordinary; few persons could bear his look and voice of censure, which was seldom, and most reluc-

worship at Cambridge, lest he should appear in any way to interfere with the course so wisely pursued by Mr. Simeon, whose incalculable usefulness will never be fully appreciated, till the day in which the unostentatious followers of the Lamb shall be rewarded in the presence of the assembled universe.

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tantly called forth. When some of the children, who had been regular in their attendance at the school, grew up, and became useful men in the world, he would often speak of their good behaviour in youth—"Aye, I remember him, he was always a nice lad." He was fond of asking—"Have you read Ellis's book on the South sea islands?—oh! worthy, sensible, good creature—he was a teacher in our Sunday schools; he is an honor to us." Several missionaries were trained in the same place, and many, who were themselves instructed there, became instructors of the succeeding generation, leading others to the source of their own usefulness and comfort. At Wotton, as well as in London, the same work went on, and his school became a blessing to the place and neighbourhood. When there, a bell rang on the Sunday morning before breakfast, to summon the inmates of his house into the midst of the teachers and children, when his family prayer was offered up amongst them, with an indescribable unction and fervour. Those who have never heard him pray, cannot imagine the sublimity with which he engaged in communion with God, or his striking conceptions of the infinite holiness of the divine nature, and of his own worthlessness; he seemed, before man, to be invested with all the dignity of the saint, while he was humbled in dust and ashes before the Most High. A remarkable proof of his power was the stillness of the children while he prayed: some of whom were converted at a very early age, whose characters he has beautifully drawn in his "Token for children." His hymns for children are very simple and beautiful. The first edition of them was corrected and improved by the poet Cowper, as appears from the following letter:—

Weston Underwood, March 29th, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

The moment when you ceased to be incog. I ought to have written you at least a few lines of apology for the liberties I had taken with your hymns, but being extremely busy at that time, and hoping that you would be so charitable as to pardon the omission, I desired Mr. Bull to be my proxy, charging him to make my excuses, and to assure you that I was perfectly satisfied with your making any alterations that you might see to be necessary in my text. If any thing fell from my pen that seemed to countenance the heresy of *universal redemption*, you did well to displace it, for it contradicted the scripture and belied me.

I had  
this letter

I am much obliged to you for the little volumes which I received safe on Saturday; and because I suppose that your end will be best answered by dispersion, if I should have occasion for half a dozen more, will order them from your bookseller without scruple.

I am, my dear sir, with much respect, and with Mrs. Unwin's compliments,

Your affectionate humble servant,

WM. COWPER.

Should you want me on any similar occasion hereafter, I am always at your disposal.

Rev. Rowland Hill.

We have now no means of ascertaining the words of the alteration mentioned in this letter. That the fundamental principles of both these good men were Calvinistic, generally speaking, is well known; but the term *particular redemption*, in opposition to *universal*

*redemption* was never made use of by Mr. Hill. He offered Christ freely to all, telling them at the same time, that by nature the withered hand of man was unable to receive the gift of salvation, until restored by his power who commanded him to stretch it forth.

The following short hymn is a fair specimen both of the style and doctrine of those he composed for children :—

A PRAYER FOR A GRACIOUS MIND.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God: Matt. v, 3.*

Dear Jesus let an infant claim  
The favour to adore thy name ;  
Thou wast so meek, that babes might be  
Encourag'd to draw near to thee.

My gracious Saviour, I believe  
Thou canst a little child receive ;  
Thy tender love for us is free,  
And why not love poor sinful me ?

Then to a child, dear Lord, impart  
An humble, meek, and lowly heart :  
O cleanse me by thy precious blood,  
And fill me with the love of God.

Tho' oft I sin, yet save me still,  
And make me love thy sacred will ;  
Each day prepare me by thy grace,  
To meet thee and behold thy face.

In the spring of 1790 Mr. Rowland Hill made another preaching tour in Wales, and his old friend Captain Joss came into Gloucestershire, to supply his place while absent. To notice, however, in detail his preaching journeys at this period, would only be a repetition of events precisely similar to those already described. Year after year they were much the same, except that his character rose, and opposition to him

rapidly diminished. Captain Joss, in his reply to Mr. Hill's application for his services while in Wales, comforted him by an account of the happy death of an eminently pious female. He tells him that just at the last, she said, "put by the curtain;" which was accordingly drawn aside, and the beams of the sun coming full into the room and on her bed, she remarked—"thirty and four years have I known the Lord, and can now no more doubt of his eternal love to me an unworthy creature, than I can doubt of the shining of the sun, which I now see and feel." She uttered only a few more words, full of faith, and then departed to those realms of joy, of which God and the Lamb are the sun, the temple, and the glory.

In the beginning of the year 1791, Mr. Rowland Hill's valued friend Mr. Venn of Yelling, found himself unequal to the task of continuing his attendance at Surry chapel. The author of the "whole duty of man" had well learnt one part of it—resignation to the divine will, which he thus expresses in a letter to Mr. Rowland Hill, dated Yelling, January 21st, 1791.—"My very dear brother, I write to you when just recovered from a gentle stroke of the palsy, which prevented me for three Sundays from speaking. This was beyond expectation—though now I shall not be able to do my own little work without an assistant, which I have in my eye. From hence you will conclude, I must give up every thought of preaching for my friends, and now withdraw from being a servant of the church, to take care only of my family and my own poor sinful soul, which will be employment enough for my impaired strength and faculties. I depend much upon my praying friends—They will not despise nor forget a poor broken vessel, in whom hath been



lodged the treasure of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. Pray for my good behaviour, and joyful acquiescence in the will of God—may pain, weakness, confinement, solitude, be all borne with great cheerfulness.” How encouraging, to see aged and afflicted ministers of Christ thus exhibiting, in their own persons, the power and value of the truths they spent their lives in enforcing on others.

Among the many results of Mr. Rowland Hill’s labours at this time in London, none were more remarkable, than the extraordinary conversions of several notorious infidels and persecutors. Some of these became afterwards zealous promoters of the cause they once hated and despised. One individual, a member of an infidel club, came on a Sunday evening into Surry chapel merely to gratify his curiosity, or to ridicule the truths he heard, but returned home crying for mercy and pardon; and in a few days after visited Mr. Rowland Hill, to inquire what he should do to be saved. He was a man engaged in a laborious business, but dedicated his few leisure hours to the service of God; and it is supposed that his benevolent exertions brought him to a premature, but happy termination of his life. Another man, a drunkard, swearer, and cruel persecutor of his wife, who belonged to Mr. Wesley’s Society, received her one evening on her return from his chapel, with such kindness of manner, that she was astonished. He said, “I have been to hear Mr. Hill;—I am a sinner; you were right, I was wrong—I hope I shall never be unkind to you again, but that we shall walk together in the same way.” Instances such as these were of frequent occurrence, in addition to the numbers of the careless and indifferent whom his ministry aroused from their

awful lethargy. The reports that were in circulation of his odd sayings in the pulpit, brought not a few into his chapel, where they heard, instead of observations to excite their mirth, an awakening appeal to sinners, that sent them as trembling and weeping penitents to a throne of grace. Most of the anecdotes told of his eccentricities in the pulpit are incorrect, though it is certain that at times he did illustrate his meaning, by introducing into his sermons what he often acknowledged afterwards he had better have left out—"but," he would add, "the queer thought came into my head, and out it came, and I could not help it; I wish it had kept in though." It almost always happened, that whenever he had given way to his natural disposition for the ludicrous, or had been more than usually eccentric in his manner, there followed a lowness of spirits, and he then acknowledged the regret he felt, at having been led away by any levity of mind, while engaged in the solemn service of the pulpit. A gentleman of his acquaintance once met him at Brighton, where he heard him preach a sermon, in which there was such a mixture of the humorous, that the congregation were excited by it to a considerable degree of laughter. This was followed by such an awful address to their consciences, and a pathos so deep and melting, that there was scarcely an individual present who did not weep. In the evening, the conversation at the house in which he was visiting was of a very lively nature. After Mr. Hill retired, the gentleman before alluded to thought he heard some one in the passage, and on going out, found him at the foot of the stairs. He feared he was unwell; but on enquiring the reason of his remaining there, he discovered him to be in deep agony of mind, to which he

gave vent in confessions of sorrow at having been such a trifler, and mourned over his unseasonable drollery with the simplicity of a child. Before he went to his room he said—"I never wish to say a single word to excite a smile, which would prevent an immediate approach to God, in all the solemnity of spiritual prayer." The scene was most affecting, and was a striking proof of his contrition when he reflected, that by giving way to the natural sprightliness of his disposition, he might have prevented his real usefulness, or have forgotten for an instant the character of a messenger of the gospel.

Mr. Rowland Hill was a great observer of the different modes of preaching, and once drew up, in his peculiar style, a string of characteristics of the various kinds of pulpit orators. He thus describes them:

*Bold Manner.* The man who preaches what he feels without fear or diffidence.

*Self-confident.* A man who goes by nobody's judgment but his own.

*Rash.* A preacher who says what comes uppermost without any consideration.

*Rambling.* A man that says all that pops in his mind without any connection.

*Stiff.* One who pins himself down to think and speak by rule, without any deviation.

*Powerful.* The man who preaches from the bottom of his heart, the truths of the gospel with energy, to the consciences of his hearers.

*Finical.* Minces out fine words with nothing in them.

*Sober.* The man who lulls you fast asleep.

*Elegant.* The man who employs all his brains upon dressing words, without ever aiming at the heart.

*Conceited.* Vainly aims at every thing, and says nothing.

*Welch Manner.* A man that bawls out very good things till he can bawl no longer.

*Methodist.* Splits the heads of his sermons into so many parts, that he almost splits the heads of his hearers.

*Affectionate.* The happy man who feels for souls tenderly, preaches Christ affectionately, and yearns over souls in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

*Dogmatic.* A man who goes by his own brains, right or wrong.

*Peevish.* One who picks into every body's thoughts, and thinks no one right but himself.

*Fanciful.* One who instead of being led by wisdom, runs after a thousand visionary whimsies and conceits.

*Self-important.* Thinks nobody like himself.

*Noisy.* A loud roar, and nothing in it.

*Genteel.* The vain fool that is fond of dressing up words without meaning.

He once said of a man who knew the truth, but seemed afraid to preach it in its fulness—"he preaches the gospel, as a donkey mumbles a thistle, *very cautiously.*" He could not endure any thing like vanity in a minister. A *very fine* dissenter, with a doctor's degree fresh from the north, once paid him a visit; he fidgetted about all the time he was talking; when he left the room, Mr. Hill lifted up his eyes and said in his most comic tone of voice, "only think that a D.D. degree should ever be converted into a pedestal for a puppy!"

During the period of the French revolution, and its concluding awful scenes, Mr. Rowland Hill wisely conceived that the best course he could take, as a mi-

nister of the truth, was, without joining any political party, to preach the gospel of Christ, as the surest antidote to disloyalty and error. Many were curious to hear him at this time, whose infidel principles, cherished by the iniquitous associations which they joined, had rendered them disaffected towards all order and proper government, whereby their own happiness and comfort, and the peace of such of their fellow-countrymen as had imbibed their pernicious notions, were destroyed. Some of these were so impressed by his sermons, that the result was a change of heart by the grace of God, and of course a change of principles and conduct. His own language on this subject is—“We know that the state receives daily benefit by the gospel we attempt to disseminate, as we have the fullest evidence that such as were enemies to the bible, and enemies to the government, are now the friends of both, and that from the best and firmest principles; and even such as are suspected of disloyalty to the constitution, are refused connection with us.” He has also recorded an encouraging instance of the power of the gospel. “Two brothers, in a large line of business, were both of them members in some of the corresponding societies. They were called by a kind providence to attend at Surry chapel. Their curiosity, or a much worse principle of ridicule and contempt, brought them at first to hear. It pleased God to impress the word home upon their hearts, and from mere monsters, they became men and christians indeed. The joy introduced into their families was inexpressible, and the credit brought to religion very considerable. When they came to me to be admitted to the Lord’s table, they freely told me, though with much compunction, what they originally were.

From them I was informed, that it is the first business of this horrid horde of rebels, to seduce all their associates into the principles of infidelity, through the medium of Paine's *Age of Reason*. This being accomplished, their language becomes the most sanguinary, and their projects the most daring and dangerous. Upon their conversion to God, all their former connections were immediately renounced, and a strict adherence to public and private worship was seriously attended to, and a large number of their apprentices, led on by them in the same way, were wonderfully recovered from the like snare." No one can for an instant doubt, that Mr. Rowland Hill, in these times of agitation and danger, pursued the proper course. May all ministers remember, that the true mode of allaying the convulsion of the waters, when the storm of unbelief and anarchy comes on, is to drop on each wave as it passes beneath them, a portion of that sacred oil which has power to diffuse a holy calm wherever its influence extends.

On the 22nd of January, 1793, good old Mr. Berridge died, aged 76. His constitution had long before given way, and he sunk into the grave, fairly worn out by exertion and anxiety for the spread of the word of life. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Simeon of Cambridge, from 2 Tim. iv, 8. Six clergymen, who perhaps a few years before would have ridiculed and despised him, supported the pall on the occasion of his interment, and gave the tribute of a heartfelt sigh to the memory of his piety, disinterestedness, and zeal. When speaking of him, Mr. Rowland Hill used to say, "many a mile have I rode, many a storm have I faced, many a snow have I gone through, to hear good old Mr. Berridge; for I felt his

ministry, when in my troubles at Cambridge, a comfort and blessing to my soul. Dear affectionate old man, I loved him to my heart."

In the autumn of 1793 Mr. Rowland Hill visited Ireland, and found pulpits open to him in Dublin and other places. His career was not, however, marked by any event of great importance or interest, till the year 1795, which he spent in great activity. At Wotton, he was exceedingly annoyed by the introduction into the town of a company of travelling actors, whom he thought it his duty to oppose, to the utmost extent of his influence. The clergyman of the parish was favourable to the licence for the performances being granted; and he and another gentleman signed the petition to the authorities for that purpose. A number of respectable inhabitants drew up a counter petition, which had Mr. Rowland Hill's entire approbation. Still the first was successful, and the performances were permitted. The bishop of the diocese was on Mr. Rowland Hill's side, but acted towards both parties in a very judicious manner, and obtained from the clergyman an assurance, that though he could not withdraw the opinion he had given on such entertainments, he would not be in future "a strenuous advocate for them." Notwithstanding this, Mr. Rowland Hill thought it right to express his censure of these amusements, in an expostulatory address to the clergyman in question, remonstrating with him on the course he had pursued, and resorting at times to a vein of sarcasm, which it is to be feared, diminished the salutary effects of some very striking and truly spiritual remarks, to be found in the pamphlet. After declaring his opinion, that there is nothing in religion hostile to such recreations as may



be demoninated innocent, and contrasting them with those of the stage, he makes, as he draws to a conclusion, the following excellent observations: "There was a time when primitive christianity could make its way, notwithstanding all the opposition that was drawn forth against it, by the persecuting rage of heathen darkness and papal superstition. Her cause was glorious, and her beauties were her own. Holiness to the Lord was engraven upon the lives of its professors. Under the influences of that divine change, which made all its real converts *new creatures in Christ Jesus*, they lived like those who firmly believed that the life of christianity was a life of deadness to the world, and devotedness to God; their only *glory was in the cross of Christ, by which they esteemed themselves crucified to the world, and the world unto them. They were dead, and their lives were hid with Christ in God.*

"Now, is this the christianity of the present day? Is there a single feature belonging to the modern professor, which bears the most distant resemblance to the sacred primitive character, as thus described in the word of God? I know the answer, and am glad to meet it. 'We need not in these days be so *strict* and *rigid* in our religion as were the primitive christians.' Now, if this expression be allowed to speak out, it means not so *pure* and *holy*; and then I ask, why not? If the nature of God be unalterable, so must the nature of true religion. And if this alteration be now allowed, when did the time for this first commence? And how far may we suppose that we have advanced in this lawful decline?

"Religion indeed may alter in its forms, under different dispensations, but not in its grand designs.

That we should *love the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves*, is the grand *ultimatum* of all religion, and the eternal demand of him *with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning*. If time should have it in its power to deface the strength of this command, by the same parity of reasoning, time might ultimately obliterate the command itself; century after century we need only love him a little and a little less. The commandment has already stood, as enjoined by our Lord, for near eighteen hundred years; and by the sample we now shew in the present century, in opposition to the *strict* and *rigid* sentiments of the primitive christians, in a century or so farther down, it seems as though it would be perfectly annihilated."

There never was a christian more convinced than Mr. Rowland Hill, of the perfect incompatibility of stage amusements with spirituality of mind. Some years after the affair at Wotton, he published, in two letters to the Rev. George Burder, some aphoristic observations on public amusements, which he entitled a "Warning to Professors."

The year 1795 was the era of an event in which Mr. Rowland Hill was most deeply interested—the formation of the London Missionary Society for the conversion of the heathen. There was no institution, to which he was to the end of his days more fervently attached; and it never possessed a more zealous and effective promoter of its interests. He was one of its first directors; he concluded its first meeting with a solemn invocation of the blessing of God on its designs; in the vestry of his chapel, the proposal was first made that the islands of the South sea should be

the scene of the commencement of its efforts ; and to the last days of his existence, the success of this cause was one of the chief objects of his solicitude and prayers. He rejoiced in the prosperity of every mission, upon the principles of the gospel, to the heathen world ; but the profession of the London missionary to unite in one great object, without reference to minor differences in views or in forms, peculiarly harmonised with the tone and character of his mind. He could never see that, except with reference to the universally acknowledged source of all truth, the word of God, such a union is at least in the present state of the christian world impracticable ; and that, as things are now, we shall probably act most effectually by arranging ourselves in separate companies under the same captain of our salvation. When those who had united with them at first, retired to act with their own particular communities, he felt it as a desertion, and used to say, “ ours is a missionary society for *all* ; why leave us ? ” In fact, it was a peculiar feature of his plans, that he never believed a scheme which he had long cherished could not be reduced to practice, making no allowance for the nature of the minds of men ; like the theorist, who in constructing some machine, forgets to calculate on the friction of the parts, and the resistance of the air.

Mr. Rowland Hill preached a missionary sermon at Surry chapel for his favourite, and now long useful society, on the occasion of the first general meeting, on Thursday, September the 25th, 1795. His text was, *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come : Matt. xxiv, 14.* There were present about two hundred ministers of various de-

nominations, forming a most impressive and animating spectacle, which has been repeated for many years on the second Wednesday in May, in the same place. The missionary day at Surry chapel was, to its devoted pastor, in the brightest sense, a gala. On that morning he rose earlier than usual, and before breakfast, was seen seated at a table near the window of his room, looking alternately at the people as they gathered in the chapel yard, hours before the opening of the doors, and at the bible and book of common prayer, to select the lessons for the day, and to refresh his recollection of the service he was about to read. When any one entered the room, he would say, "see what a churchman I am ; I must have it all correct : " then perhaps he would make a few remarks on the first movements of his mind towards the great cause of missionary labours. Presently Mrs. Hill came down, when he said to his servant, "come up to prayer." The family were soon assembled, and in a short, but sublime supplication, he poured forth the deep feeling of his soul. It was a solemn and affecting moment ; few could have heard him unmoved. At breakfast he was interrupted every instant, but not at all annoyed, by the entrance of those connected with the management of the society, or by the introduction of some distinguished foreigner, who desired to witness the routine of the day. Now and then he was called out to prevent the persons in the yard, from rushing through the house into the chapel, in their anxiety to gain early admission ; and it was only by the strongest remonstrances, that many of them were prevailed on to wait for the opening of the doors. As soon as the hour of service arrived, he went to the vestry ; presently there was a general movement

in the chapel, and all eyes were fixed on his venerable figure, as he slowly ascended the steps of the desk. No reader ever gave a more solemn effect to the liturgy of the church of England; his deep feeling, brought out by the scene and the occasion, his powerful and melodious voice, and his thorough conception of the beauty and spirituality of the form of prayer he loved, combined to give a pathos and dignity to his performance of this part of the service, which has never been surpassed by any minister. After the prayers, the missionary hymn was given out by one of the phalanx of ministers who occupied the front of the galleries, and sung by the immense congregation, all standing. The full tones of the fine organ, the combination, in a simple melody, of three thousand voices, and the recollection of the object of their meeting, inspired an emotion which thrilled through every christian's breast. After the sermon, Mr. Rowland Hill held a plate at one of the doors, and the people seemed to strive for the honour of putting their donations into his hands. If the collection went on well, his countenance beamed with delight, and he hastened at its conclusion up the steps to his own house, to reckon its amount, surrounded by those whom he had invited to dine with him in the schoolroom. The sum gathered was seldom found deficient. Once, in times of difficulty, it was less than usual by nearly a hundred pounds. His depression was evident to all near him; but in the evening, as he sat silent and in low spirits at the falling off, a gentle tap was heard at the door, a letter was brought in, and carelessly opened, with the remark "a begging letter, I dare say." It contained a draft for one hundred pounds, from a generous individual, who had

observed the effect of the diminution in the collection on his mind, and who expressed his anxiety for the honour of Surry chapel, and the comfort of its then aged pastor. His eye brightened, and he exclaimed, "the Lord hath not forsaken us, we shall now do better than ever; we should never doubt."

In the midst of the large company he entertained at dinner after the morning service, he said little; but when he spoke, there was an instant silence. Several clergymen were generally of the party, and sometimes a discussion took place between them and the dissenters who were present. Mr. Hill used vigilantly to watch this, that he might instantly repress any symptoms of sparring. It once happened that the parties growing warm appealed to him. He put on one of his arch looks, and said "well I declare I must say you are both equally wrong; and I was just thinking that if you were tied together by the tail, like two cats, and thrown over a forked stick, you would scratch each others eyes out." The effect of such an unexpected *decision* must be left to the imagination.

The majority of Mr. Rowland Hill's guests on the missionary day, left the dinner table at an early hour, to attend some evening meeting of the same society: two or three intimate friends generally remained with him, and he then opened his mind with much freedom, both with reference to recollections of the past and anticipations of the future. He would tell of his early trials and difficulties, speak of the present aspect of the times, and intersperse between his observations the most amusing and enlivening anecdotes. If the sermon had been elaborate and wanted unction, he would say, "that *cut and dried stuff* never tells; it does not get hold of the people; it is too *fine* by half.

There was once a man preached for me at Wotton, and used such hard words the people could not understand him. Some of the plain folks used to say to me when I came from London,—‘we do know what we do hear, when you do preach; but Mr. — do use so many *dictionary* words we ca’nt understand his meaning—we don’t know where he do get ’em, unless it be out of the almanack.’” On one occasion he said,—“it is astonishing what nonsense some people will talk in the pulpit. When I was out the other day on a missionary journey, I heard of a man who had been preaching on modern improvements, and amongst others, of the merciful way of making war since the invention of gunpowder, which proved so much *easier* a death than that inflicted by the ancient weapons. He got rightly served for his pains, for they have called him the *gunpowder parson* ever since.” Then he added “I preach Christ crucified; and when that ceases to be my only theme, may I cease from the pulpit?” Sometimes he remarked, “I once heard a sermon indeed in Surry chapel; it was from Dr. Chalmers—O what a man that is—O what a lustre his humility gives to the powers of his great mind, and to the grace that is in his heart.” He wrote in a volume of Chalmers’s sermons—“many books I began to read I could not finish; but these admirable discourses so attracted my attention, that I could not take my eye from them, till after I had read the last page with supreme regret.”

The members of the London Missionary Society, who belong to different religious societies connected with the various places of dissenting worship in the metropolis, are in the habit of concluding their week of business, by what they call a missionary communion.



The communicants are admitted by tickets from their ministers, who are supposed to know their religious state. In these meetings Mr. Rowland Hill felt a real interest and pleasure, and considered them as excellent means for the promotion of christian love at home, as well as sympathy with the miseries of the heathen world. He attended them regularly, addressed those who were present on such occasions with great effect, and returned home in a highly spiritual and serious frame of mind. The excellent Dr. Steinkopff had the same view of the use of these meetings, and frequently attended them.

In the year 1796 Mr. Rowland Hill repeated his visit to Ireland. He had found a ready access to the affections of the pious people in Dublin, and his name has ever been held in high veneration in that city. Letters to him from his Irish hearers, bear testimony to his zealous exertions there, and to the commencement at that period of the work of religion amongst them. A clergyman pressed him to go into the North, to "proclaim the word of life in his parish," where he tells him that notwithstanding the numbers of papists among his people, a work of grace was going on. His vivid imagination, animated manner, liveliness of disposition, and rooted abhorrence of popery, suited in a high degree the pious protestants who crowded around him. Letters still in existence from his Irish friends, express their assurance of his deep sympathy in the awful scenes of 1797. The clergyman just referred to tells him, "not less than 15,000 lives have been lost in the course of the rebellion, out of which number something less than 1,000 might be on the part of the loyalists. In our contest with the French, our loss has been small; the rebels who joined them

were papists, with scarcely the exception of a single protestant, and would no doubt have committed many outrages, had they not been restrained by the interference of the French officers, to whose humane exertions the bishop of Killaloe owes his life." Wherever he went, his presence inspired such confidence and regard, that those whom he admitted to any degree of intimacy, looked upon him as a friend and a brother, to whom they might appeal for advice and consolation in the difficulties and trials by which they were afterwards surrounded; and their experience in such circumstances would have allowed them to have addressed him in the words of Ovid,

O mihi care quidem semper, sed tempore duro

Cognite, res postquam procubuere more.

In the year 1798 Mr. Rowland Hill paid his first visit to Scotland. He was invited there by a few zealous persons who had engaged the circus in Edinburgh as a chapel, on the plan of the Tabernacle in London. They requested Mr. Hill to come and open it, and spend five or six weeks with them. He was pleased with the idea, and readily acceded to their request. The circus had been secured for one year only, by way of experiment, and it was agreed to fix the hours of service at seven o'clock in the morning, and six in the evening, that there might be no interference with the regular attendance of persons at their own places of worship; a plan of which Mr. Rowland Hill entirely approved. He published on his return the journal of his tour, with a dedication to Robert Haldane, Esq. the gentleman who was deputed to invite him to Edinburgh. He informs us in this work that he left Wotton-under-edge on the "Lord's day, July 15, 1798," after the afternoon service, and preached at

Frampton, on his way to the North in the evening. After preaching daily at various places in his way, he reached Macclesfield on July 19. He says—"A visit to this town was a peculiar pleasure and satisfaction to my mind. Mr. Simpson, the minister of the new church, is my dear old friend. Our acquaintance commenced at Cambridge. Being of the same college, our custom was to read with each other the Greek Testament, and other evangelical publications; these meetings we always concluded with prayer. The university was then almost in total darkness. No wonder, therefore if for such exercises, and for some other strong symptoms of a *methodistical bias*, we were speedily marked, and had the honour of being pointed at as the curiosities of the day. This did good. Others soon joined us to the number of ten or twelve. Some of them were *Nicodemian disciples*; others have proved bold and useful ministers; and some of them, I trust, have been taken to glory. Blessed be God, things now bear a more pleasing aspect in that university. The gospel is at present not only faithfully preached by Mr. Simeon and others, but many young men are training up, who I trust will, if worldly prudence and the fear of man prevent not, prove a blessing to the church, by preaching with fervency and zeal, her long neglected doctrines to the consciences of their hearers."

After preaching in Mr. Simpson's church to a "very serious and crowded congregation," he proceeded to Manchester. The minister of St. Clement's, Mr. Smythe, with whom his acquaintance commenced in Dublin, welcomed him to his pulpit, where he addressed "a solemn and attentive auditory" on the eternal obligations of the law, and our free salvation

by the gospel: 2 Cor. iii, 18. He passed no day without preaching, till he came to Penrith, where he was told no one would receive him, on which he remarks, "I hope some gospel hero in the neighbourhood will make it a point to besiege that town. The inhabitants, as report says, are awfully dead in trespasses and sins. I am informed that even the few dissenters there, are dissenters from many of the invaluable truths of the gospel." At Carlisle he officiated in a small chapel built by Lady Glenorchy, and passed the evening at the Grapes Inn, but could not prevail on the landlord to take any thing for his accommodation. "This" he says, "I mention as a token of respect for the kind reception given to a stranger, as it was done in the name of the Lord Jesus. They gave much more than a cup of cold water to an unworthy prophet in thy name; may they receive much more than a prophet's reward!" His first evening in Scotland was spent at Langham, where there was a fair, and he regrets, with some very proper remarks on the evil tendency of such scenes, that he was obliged to spend the night in this uncongenial situation. To avoid the noise and confusion, he took a solitary walk by the river's side. There a gentleman, whom he conceived to be the minister of the parish, offered him an asylum in his house from the disquietude of the town; but having procured a private lodging he declined it. While conversing with this kind individual, two of his unknown Edinburgh friends, Messrs. Haldane and Aikman, passed by. He discovered that they were itinerants, on the errand of preaching the gospel, and had the gratification of their company during the remainder of the evening. At Hawick he saw for the first time, a Scotch funeral,

conducted without a prayer or the presence of a minister, and observed to a bystander—"your funerals are soon over." A loquacious old woman told him, prayers were no use to the dead. This he admitted, but "suggested that the people of Scotland lost an excellent opportunity of doing good to the living, if they could do nothing for the dead." He adds "I was surprised at this omission in Scotland; but considering that a Scotsman always stands as an antipode to the pope, it appeared probable, that papal prayers for the dead determined John Knox, their valuable but uncouth reformer, against all prayers at a funeral whatever."

At Edinburgh Mr. Rowland Hill was received by Mr. James Haldane, at his house in George Street, where he says "nothing was wanting, but more gratitude and thankfulness on my part, for such a kind and affectionate reception." On the day after his arrival, Sunday, July 29, he opened the circus. His text was the prayer of Moses, Exodus xxxiii, 14, 15,—*If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* In the morning the attendance consisted only of a few hundreds, but in the evening the place was full. His subject was, 1 Cor. i, 22, 23, 24, and he "employed some time in showing Paul's method of treating his proud Corinthian hearers." "How very different," he proceeds, "is the immediate and direct simplicity of the apostle, compared to too many of the cold, and formal productions of the present day. O the simplicity that is in Christ! How lovely in its effects, while the minister preaches just as he feels, wisely regulated by the word of God, and warmly animated with a desire to bring salvation to the sinner's heart!"

Mr. Rowland Hill's method of preaching was a complete novelty in Scotland, except to a few aged persons who recollected the visits of Whitefield to that country. An anecdote in a Scotch pulpit was an experiment that no Presbyterian would have ventured on; but those told by Mr. Hill were so lively and affecting, that his hearers were raised to the highest pitch of interest. An excellent Scotch minister<sup>1</sup> who was present on many of these occasions, thus describes their effect: "During some of his sermons, the eternal world appeared to be next door to us, and but a step between us and the judgment day, which seemed to cause a shaking among our dry bones. Not that Mr. Hill preached a different gospel from what we had been accustomed to hear, for at that time as well as now, there were various able ministers of the New Testament, both in and out of the establishment, but there was a general formal sameness, seldom what was striking or catching."

The singularity of Mr. Rowland Hill's manner, the fervour of his address, and the brilliant powers of his active and energetic mind, soon drew vast multitudes around him. The circus, large as it was, could not contain half the numbers who flocked to hear him; and they cried out that the galleries were giving way under the pressure of the crowd. He accordingly went forth to the Calton Hill, where he preached from a platform to a mass of people, amounting to at least ten thousand in number. The spot was well adapted to such a purpose; the platform was placed in the centre of a sort of natural bason, and the green slopes which surrounded it, were covered with innu-

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. John Campbell, the well known missionary to Africa, who kindly communicated to me his recollections of the visits of Mr. Hill to Scotland.



merable immortal beings, silent as the breathless evening of autumn, fixed in deep attention to the words that issued from the sonorous and commanding voice of the speaker, as he delivered in all the majesty and dignity of his office, his message of mercy to the lost and ruined sinner. The retiring of the multitude under the most solemn impressions was, indeed, a touching sight; every person seemed deep in thought, and numbers were, for the first time, absorbed in the concerns of their souls and of eternity. The old women, as they looked out of their doors at the slowly passing stream of human beings, observing a party of soldiers among them exclaimed, "Eh sirs, what will become of us now! what will this turn to! the very *sodgers* are ganging to hear preaching." It was always a principle with Mr. Rowland Hill, to expect great things from his labours: "While we are straightened," he says, "in our expectations, the blessing is withheld; but when our hearts are enlarged, the more we ask, the more we have."

The same interest which had been excited by Mr. Hill's preaching in Edinburgh, accompanied him in a short excursion into the Western Highlands. He first reached Glasgow, on August 13th, time enough to preach in the evening in the churchyard of the High church." The scene he describes as "most solemn." "Underneath us," he adds, "were the remains, I may venture to say, of millions, waiting for the resurrection. Here I stood on a widely extended space, covered, or nearly covered, with the living, all immortals—five thousand, I should suppose, at least. What solemn work to address such multitudes! *Who is sufficient for these things!*" Though greatly exhausted by his exertions, he "could not refuse the re-



quest to preach next morning" at eight o'clock, when he proceeded to Paisley, and preached in the yard of the church, over which Witherspoon once presided, to an assembly nearly as large as that at Glasgow. He says, "my soul loves Paisley, for there I believe christians love each other. May the precious leaven that is evident there, spread itself through the North. I grieve to find so many separated by human laws on earth, who are all to be united in one, by divine love, in heaven and glory."

The return of Mr. Rowland Hill to Edinburgh was marked by an increase, even of the immense crowds who had previously flocked to hear him. On the Calton Hill he now calculates the numbers at fifteen thousand, in addressing whom, his principal aim in his sermons was to alarm the sinner. He experienced a most hospitable reception at Melville house, whose noble owner was glad to have the benefit of his services in his family worship. The last time he preached on Calton Hill, it is supposed the congregation amounted to nearly twenty thousand, though the rain threatened. He thus expresses the feelings of his mind on the occasion—"to be clear from the blood of such a multitude, and to declare to them the whole counsel of God, what wisdom and grace does it require!" On this occasion, a collection was made for the charity workhouse, which was thankfully received by the magistrates of the city.

Thus did this zealous messenger of Christ labour in Scotland; and it was believed that during his first visit to the North, at least two hundred souls were converted to God, some of whom had been notorious for their vice and profligacy. At Rotherham, on his way home, he preached on a Sunday evening to ten

thousand people in the open air, on the necessity of conversion, and repentance unto life, from Acts iii, 19. When he began, he was annoyed by the bells of a neighbouring church ; but as soon as they were told what was going on, the ringers civilly desisted. He was very near, however, meeting with a much more serious inconvenience. A madman rushed through the congregation, brandishing a drawn sword with great vehemence, and struggled hard to reach him. He was speedily disarmed by the people, without injury to any one ; and the tranquillity of the assemblage was but little disturbed by the event. Mr. Hill arrived at Wotton, on Saturday, September 22nd. He concludes his journal with these words :—" I have now finished a nine week's gospel tour of full 1,200 miles ; have preached in much weakness to many thousands ; and have been more or less engaged on different calls, near eighty times, with no other calamity than a little indisposition for a few days, and the temporary lameness of the same horse which conveyed me through all my journey, excepting the short respite he required till he could overtake me on the road. Without also the least personal insult from any quarter, excepting a small share of a distant hiss of false aspersion, and I trust unjust reflection. For them I only quote that fine expression in our church liturgy, 'pardon our persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts.'

"Thus again am I restored to the spot I love as a place of temporary retirement ; a place well situated as a sphere of usefulness, and dear to me, as it was one of the first-fruits of my youthful ministry. I bless God, many souls were then called and saved by grace, and many of them I trust are gone to glory. The con-

gregation is as large as in the best of our days; notwithstanding, I fear but little real work has of late been done. From whence, my God, is this suspension? Is the fault in me, or is it in them? Or is it that I am to be called elsewhere, by being driven to give a less portion of my time to a people, who ‘by seeing they see, and do not perceive, and by hearing they hear, and do not understand?’” There are but few diligent ministers of the gospel, who will not feel and appreciate these remarks.

The unprecedented exertions of Mr. Rowland Hill in Scotland, and the increase of itinerant preaching, excited the attention of the general assembly, who thought it their duty to publish, what they entitled their Pastoral Admonition, warning the population against countenancing such irregularities, and accompanying their advice, with some severe censures on the conduct and motives of the travelling preachers. Mr. Rowland Hill, in his *Observations on the Established Church of Scotland*, addressed to James Haldane, Esq., had himself made some remarks, which were by no means calculated to allay the angry feelings, of the body to whom they referred. To these he appended “Reflections on some party distinctions in England.” With regard to establishments he observes, that “even the outward profession of christianity is no small, blessing to any nation; and I should conceive, without deviating from the laws of liberty, or of christianity, the rulers of the earth may, and ought to support and protect it.” Upon this principle he declared himself a friend to establishments; but they must be such as would permit him to have an “uncontrolled right over his own pulpit,” and “allow him the assistance of those, whose ministrations he believed would

be to the spiritual advancement of the people of his charge." He adds, after his own manner, "but such admission, say some, would be *riding upon the back of all order and decorum* : happy should I be to ride upon the back of *such* order and decorum, till I had ridden them to death."<sup>2</sup> "By this primitive mode of procedure," in his opinion, "a great number of valuable ministers have been raised up; some from the army, some from the navy. We bless God," he adds, "for the names of a Captain Scott, and a Captain Joss; for captains have tongues and brains as well as doctors." That there are defects in all establishments can neither be doubted or denied; but once admit the principle, that *any individual* may infringe the rules and order of his religious community, according to his own views, and we introduce such elements of irregularity and confusion, as must eventually destroy all discipline, government, and real usefulness. There are abundant spheres of exertion for every christian; and it matters not much in what circle, within the pale of the church, a man moves, provided he fully fills out its circumference. It was on this point of *preaching*, and the power of the stated minister to admit whom he would into his pulpit, that Mr. Rowland Hill differed, both with the churchman and the presbyterian; nor could he see, that an objection which he raised himself against this mode of procedure, is amongst the many unanswerable arguments which are to be brought against it. "I know also," he says, "that this view of matters will *considerably lessen the idea of ministerial importance, when the preacher is*

<sup>2</sup> I once asked him why he called his carriage horses *order* and *decorum*—"Oh," he answered, "they said in the north, 'Mr. Hill rides upon the backs of *order* and *decorum*'—so I called one of my horses *order* and the other *decorum*, that they might tell the truth in one way if they did not in another."

*found promiscuously among all sorts of characters."* This had, however, no weight with him, because he conceived the mode he adopted as consonant "with God's own method of sending forth his labourers." This *one idea* occupied such an immoveable position in his mind, that it became the hinge upon which all its motions turned, the centre from which they sprung, the point to which they reverted.

Mr. Rowland Hill's controversy with the general assembly, marred both the pleasure and usefulness of his second journey to Scotland. It was carried on with vehemence in letter after letter, and pamphlet after pamphlet. It engrossed all his sermons, and was the perpetual topic of his conversation. To ridicule their Admonition seemed his chief object. It is true the smile was often turned against his opponents; but "probably," observes a shrewd and pious Scotchman, "Satan was clapping his shoulder and whispering, well done Rowland—it is far better for you to expend your ammunition against the general assembly, than against my kingdom—I thank you, for I have not lost one follower during this second visit of yours." True it was, that he was caught in this snare—not one conversion was ever proved to have taken place during this visit; but there is every reason to believe he afterwards saw and regretted his error. Thus not only his virtues, but his failings, will be a lesson to the gospel minister: and if a spirit emancipated from the incumbrances of the material world, has any retrospective interest in the scenes which it has quitted, or any cognizance of its memory being cherished in the breasts of the living, his would at this instant desire, that not only the excellencies of his character should be held forth as an example, but that the errors

into which he fell should also be recorded, as dangers to be carefully avoided. This was assuredly his feeling while on earth. When observing that some biographers had painted the characters of good men as though they had no faults, he used to say earnestly—"Well, I hope no one will ever write in this way about me, a poor miserable sinner."

As may be expected, from the foregoing observations, the journal of Mr. Rowland Hill's second tour in Scotland, contains but little matter to which we can advert with profit. His time and his talents seemed entirely taken up with attacking the general assembly. On his road he paid a visit to Mr. Robinson, of Leicester, and preached in his church. "Our first acquaintance," he says, "commenced at Cambridge; he was then pointed at, with myself, as being out of the common way. Since then, however, blessed be God! things are considerably altered for the better in that seat of learning." The crowds, it is true, on Calton Hill were still large, but there are no evidences of conversions to God. His account of the anxiety to hear in the neighbourhood of Forres is very striking. "The people travel almost throughout the night, that they may reach a morning sermon. From twenty miles around, and some even from a greater distance, they flock from every quarter, and hear with a peculiar seriousness and attention; while not much less, and sometimes many more, than a thousand, or nearly two thousand people would attend, and that, too, in a country where the inhabitants were by no means numerous, and where the Gaelic is in general use among the common people." Mr. Rowland Hill did not return to Scotland, for more than twenty years after this second journey. He was in his eightieth

year when he paid his last visit to Edinburgh, the scenes of which will be reserved for another part of this volume. His mode of preaching will form the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Mr. Rowland Hill's preaching.*

MR. ROWLAND HILL may be said to have been a preacher, for more than seventy years. A cottage on his father's estate, was the scene of his first attempts to expound the scriptures. Some of the tenantry attended there to hear him, which, coming to the ears of Sir Rowland, he determined to inquire into the truth of the report, before he noticed it to his son. He accordingly asked a half-witted boy—"who preaches at your mother's house?" The lad replied—"the young man that *fettled* mother's clock;" and Sir Rowland, not being aware that the young preacher had amused himself in repairing the old woman's clock,<sup>1</sup> supposed he had been misinformed, consequently no interruption was given to the preaching in the cottage. To those who have never heard Mr. Rowland Hill, the most vivid description will convey no adequate conception of the unique mode of his ad-

<sup>1</sup> He was very fond of this employment. Once, at a friend's house, he had retired, as the company supposed, before preaching, to consider his sermon; but on his host's entering the room to inform him that the time had arrived for going to the place of worship, he found him with an old clock, all to pieces, on the table. Mr. Hill said—"I have been mending your old clock, and I will finish it to-morrow." He preached with more than usual ease and fervour, and drew several beautiful images from the occupation in which his friend, to his surprise, had found him engaged.

dress, and of his singularly dignified and commanding appearance in the pulpit ; nor do such of his sermons as have been printed, afford the slightest illustration of the style of his natural eloquence. It was an uninterrupted stream of ideas, from a warm heart and fertile imagination, mingled with every species of similitude that suggested itself to his mind at the moment. Robert Hall said of him—"no man has ever drawn, since the days of our Saviour, such sublime images from nature ; here Mr. Hill excels every other man." Indeed, his excursive mind gathered tribute to his Master's cause, from every portion of the visible creation ; and as he described his anticipations of the invisible glories, and perfect holiness and happiness of the unrevealed scenes of heaven, it might have been thought, at times, that, like an angel, he had seen them. The limits of this work will allow only a few specimens of his most striking observations in the pulpit, but these cannot be omitted.

A few years ago, when making a preaching tour in Yorkshire, Mr. Rowland Hill paid a visit to an old friend, who said to him—"Mr. Hill, it is just *sixty-five* years since I first heard you preach, and I remember your text, and part of your sermon." "'Tis more than I do," was his remark,—“You told us,” his friend proceeded, “that some people were very squeamish about the delivery of different ministers, who preached the same gospel. You said, suppose you were attending to hear a will read, where you expected a legacy to be left you, would you employ the time when it was reading, in criticising the manner in which the lawyer read it? No, you would not; you would be giving all ear to hear if any thing was left to you, and how much it was. That is the way I would advise you to hear the gospel.”

The energy of his manner at times, and the power of his voice, were almost overwhelming. Once, at Wotton, he was completely carried away by the impetuous rush of his feelings, and, raising himself to his full stature, he exclaimed—"Because I am in earnest, men call me an enthusiast; but I am not; mine are the words of truth and soberness. When I first came into this part of the country, I was walking on yonder hill; I saw a gravel pit fall in, and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help, so loud, that I was heard in the town below, at a distance of a mile; help came, and rescued two of the poor sufferers. No one called me an *enthusiast* then; and when I see eternal destruction ready to fall upon poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrecoverably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud on them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast now! No, sinner, I am not an enthusiast in so doing; I call on thee *aloud* to fly for refuge, to the hope set before thee in the gospel of Christ Jesus."

He had a singular facility of suiting his reasoning to the capacities of the uneducated, without seeming to be aiming low; bringing them insensibly up to him, and not, as is too often the case, offending them by a direct and visible effort to descend on their account. If a preacher attempts this, the lower orders either see it, and are displeased, or else they look upon him as one who can soar no higher. The benevolent man who says to the object of his charity, by word or manner,—“This plain gift is good enough for you,” destroys all sensation of gratitude in the person he relieves; but it is possible to befriend a distressed fellow creature, without making him feel the lowness of his situation; so it is possible to come down to the

level of a poor man's intellect, without giving him offence, by letting him know with what vast condescension a minister is trying to do it. The following is an instance of Mr. Rowland Hill's management of this difficulty:—He was preaching for the London Missionary Society, to a congregation of plain farmers and their labourers. Now, it is a very common objection with persons of this description, that the heathen have sufficient light, and that, therefore, we might let them alone, and do more at home. His object was to reason them out of this opinion, and he addressed them thus—"I admit that the heathen have some natural light, but they do not use even this aright. Now, suppose the whole family in a farm-house, assembled round the large kitchen fire on a winter's evening, all peaceful and happy. Presently, the stableman opens the door, and cries out, 'Master, master, the thieves are robbing the hen-roost.' Up they all start; the farmer rushes to his closet for his lantern; he lights the candle, and runs out, and, holding up the light nearly to *his head*, advances with cautious steps. The wheel-barrow has been left in the way, and over it the good man falls—and why?—because he has no light?—no, because he used it improperly. Thus it is with the heathen."

Once, in a manufacturing town, the subject of his preaching was the influences of the Holy Spirit. On his way to the chapel he stopped several times, and appeared to be watching with interest, the ascent of the smoke from the factory chimnies. In his sermon, he wished to describe the obedience of a willing soul, to the gentlest breathings of the Spirit of God, and said—"I have been watching the smoke, as it went up from the numerous chimnies around me; there was

scarcely any air, yet how obediently it moved in the direction of the softest breeze. So it is with the regenerate soul, when God breathes upon its renewed powers—*He makes it willing in the day of his power.*"

A very favorite subject with Mr. Hill, was the inseparable union of justification and sanctification. He commenced one of his sermons on it with these words,—"God cannot make us happy, except he make us holy; therefore, whom he justifies he necessarily also sanctifies." "Then," he would say, "many are willing to be *justified*, but desire not to be *sanctified*. Not so with me; I can say of justification and of sanctification like the child, who replied, when asked which he loved best, his father or his mother, '*I love them both best.*'"

When speaking of the love and holiness of God, he seemed to rise above the world, and his countenance beamed with an almost unearthly illumination. Once he endeavoured to convey to his hearers, by a variety of striking illustrations, some idea of his conceptions of the divine love; but suddenly he cast his eyes towards heaven, and exclaimed—"but I am unable to reach the lofty theme!—yet I do not think, that the smallest fish that swims in the boundless ocean, ever complains of the immeasurable vastness of the deep. So it is with me; I can plunge with my puny capacity into a subject, the immensity of which I shall never be able fully to comprehend!"

No man was ever more practical in his preaching; *let your light shine*, was his constant exhortation. "If the sun shines," he would say, "on a dull brick or stone, they reflect none of its beams; there is nothing in them capable of this; nor is there in an ungodly

man, any natural power of reflecting the light of God. But let the sun shine upon a diamond, and see what rays of sparkling beauty it emits. Just so the christian who has the graces of the spirit; when God shines on his soul, beams of celestial loveliness are reflected by him on the world." "The christian's character" he said, "should *savour* of holiness. The promise is, *I will be as the dew unto Israel*; and how sweet is the fragrance of the flower, after the gentle falling of the dew—so must the true believer be, under the soft distilment of the droppings of heaven on his heart." "Cultivate," he often urged, "a spirit of love. Love is the diamond, amongst the jewels of the believer's breastplate. The other graces shine, like the precious stones of nature, with their own peculiar lustre and various hues; but the diamond is *white*—now in white all the colours are united: so in love is centred every other christian grace and virtue—*love is the fulfilling of the law*. It is the only source of true obedience to the commands of God." "If we love God," he used to say, "we must necessarily love that holy law, which is a transcript of his divine mind and will. Some people will tell you that if you would gain heaven, you must pass through a *self-denying* course of the practice of virtue and obedience—they make religion *house of correction work*—no, no, I love the service of my God; like the bird, I fly at liberty, on the wings of my obedience to his holy will." Frequently he described the nature of christian obedience, by saying, "The grace of God begets, in the man that is born of the spirit, a natural hatred to sin, though he loved it in his old estate. The vulture's nature is to prey, with horrid preference, on the putrid carcasses of the dead. But did you ever see the gentle dove gorg-

ing this loathsome food? So the sinner feeds with delight, on the nauseous enjoyments of his iniquity, like the carrion-eating bird of prey, while the regenerate soul has a holy disgust of all that is offensive to its heavenly nature."

His views of the efficacy of prayer were singularly happy. "We know," were his words, "that the infinite God, cannot be moved or actually drawn nearer to us by prayer, but prayer draws the christian nearer to God. If a boat is attached to a large vessel by a rope, the person in the former, does not bring the ship nearer to him by his pulling the rope, but he brings the boat, and himself in it, nearer to the ship. So the more fervently we pray, the nearer we bring ourselves to the Lord most high. The christian is therefore enjoined to *pray without ceasing*; not that he can be always engaged in the positive act, but he ought to have, what I call a *holy aptitude for prayer*. The bird is not always on the wing, but he is ready to fly in an instant; so the believer is not always on the wing of prayer, but he has such a gracious aptitude for this exercise, that he is prepared in an instant, when in danger or need, to fly for refuge to his God. In all the avocations of time, the child of God will never lose sight of his heavenly father. I have often seen a little child following his parent in the fields, and stooping now and then to gather a few flowers. He looks up and sees him at a distance; the little creature runs and gets up to him again, afraid he should go too far away. So the christian, while gathering a few flowers from the world, suffers his God to be often a distance from him; but the instant he perceives that he is alone, he runs to reach again his father, protector, and friend."



He had a happy mode of contrasting the light of reason with the light of religion. "By the light of reason," he would say, "we cast a sort of glaring illusion around ourselves; but if confided in, it tends only to obscure our vision of more exalted glories. Illuminate this town; the streets are light, while the heavens are lost in darkness; but when the day breaks forth, both the earth and the sky become visible. So the *sparks of our own kindling*, while they shed an artificial brilliancy for a short distance around us, involve the scenes above, in shadows even darker than those of night; but if *the day spring from on high* dawn in the soul, we have clear views both of earth and heaven."

The effect of his bursts of eloquence were much heightened, by their flashing forth unstudied, the instant the idea, oft in reference to some present object, arose in his mind. On one occasion, when past the age usually allotted to man, he was preaching on a summer's evening to an immense crowd, assembled partly within and partly without the walls of a chapel. A window was taken out, and he stood on the seat for a pulpit, so that all heard him. Ere he concluded, the sun, in unclouded glory, had just reached the edge of the horizon; he pointed to it and exclaimed, in a tone of the sublimest energy, "See you the sun, how majestically and brightly it sheds its parting beams around you! I have heard, that the rays of the setting sun produce a most salutary effect on the vegetable world—O that my setting sun, which must soon go down in death, may, during the evening of my days, be more and more blessed, in shedding a beneficial light on the trees the Lord hath planted, and is watering to his glory."

The real secret of Mr. Rowland Hill's preaching having been, at times, somewhat tinctured with the ludicrous, was, that he seemed as though he were unable to restrain the rapid succession of ideas which crowded into his mind, and tended to explain his meaning. It will be easily believed, that the majority of the stories told of his pulpit peculiarities, are without the slightest foundation; nor did he ever yield to the force of the *vis comica*, which had so great a natural power over his faculties, except for the sake of illustration. For instance, when he was preaching to very plain people, he said, "I want you to have a holy aversion to sin. Do you know what I mean by aversion? Suppose any one of you were to put your hand into your pocket and feel *a toad* there, you would draw it out instantly from an aversion to the animal. Now my desire is, that when conscious of the presence of sin, you should have just such an aversion as this to it—a hatred of it, and disgust at its horrid nature." One day, when speaking of vanity in dress, and the inconsistency of it in christians, he looked archly and said, "I am, like old John Bunyan, thankful to say, that I have only one man in my country congregation who wears a *pigtail*." It is impossible not to acknowledge, as he did freely, that he was at times too ready to use expressions calculated to produce a smile on the countenances of his hearers. Still, while the truth of this is readily confessed, the exaggerations must be contradicted.

The few sermons Mr. Rowland Hill published, were written by him from recollection, or from notes taken by others at the time of their delivery, but give no idea of the freedom and perfect ease of his manner. He placed no restraint upon his flow of feel-

ing ; the exuberant fountain of his mind seemed capable of an endless stream, of every possible variety of thought and image. Perhaps the best specimen of his printed sermons, is the one preached on Sunday, December 4th, 1803, to the volunteers assembled at Surry chapel, from Psalm xx, 7, 8. It was on this occasion that he introduced his hymn to the tune of "God save the King." The words were,

Come, thou incarnate word,  
Gird on thy mighty sword,  
Our prayer attend :  
Come, and thy people bless,  
And give thy word success,  
Spirit of holiness  
On us descend !

O may thy servant be  
Fill'd with sweet liberty,  
Clothed with power !  
Bid, Lord, the dead arise  
By thy almighty voice ;  
May we in thee rejoice  
In this glad hour.

After the sermon, the hymn, which he wrote to the tune of "Rule Britannia," was sung with wonderful effect by the immense congregation, all standing.

THE KINGDOM OF IMMANUEL EXALTED.

When Jesus first at heaven's command  
Descended from his azure throne,  
Attending angels joined his praise,  
Who claim'd the kingdoms for his own.  
Hail Immanuel—Immanuel we 'll adore,  
And sound his fame from shore to shore.

Girt with omnipotence supreme,  
The powers of darkness trembling stood

To hear the dire decree, and feel  
The vengeance of the mighty God !  
Hail Immanuel, &c.

Not with the sword that warriors wear,  
But with a sceptre dipt in blood,  
He bends the nations to obey,  
And rules them by the love of God.  
Hail Immanuel, &c.

O may the memory of his name,  
Inspire our armies for the fight ;  
Our vaunting foes shall die with shame,  
Or quit our coasts with hasty flight.  
Hail Immanuel, &c.

In his salvation is our boast,  
And in the strength of Israel's God  
Our troops shall lift their banners high,  
Our navies spread their flags abroad.  
Hail Immanuel, &c.

Soon may the kingdoms of the earth,  
From sin and Satan's dreadful thrall,  
By thy great power and grace be freed,  
And Christ alone be all in all.  
Hail Immanuel, &c.

Ride on and prosper, King of kings,  
'Till all the powers of hell resign  
Their dreadful trophies at thy feet ;  
And endless glory shall be thine.  
Hail Immanuel, &c.

In the copy published in his hymn book, Mr. Hill omitted the three verses which have reference to the particular occasion for which they were composed, and added the two following :—

Go with thy servants, glorious Lord,  
And bid them tread the tempter down ;  
Be more than conqueror by thy word ;  
And wear the universal crown.  
Hail Immanuel, &c.

Soon shall the monster, sin, submit  
His hateful sceptre to thy call ;  
Death, and death's author soon shall die,  
And Jesus Christ be all in all.

Hail Immanuel, &c.

The singing of this last hymn, as it was occasionally heard at Surry chapel, by three thousand people, led by a first-rate player on an organ of very superior powers, afforded, probably, one of the most inspiring examples of congregational music ever heard. This was admitted, even by those who disapproved the introduction of the air into the worship of God. Indeed the singing of Mr. Rowland Hill's London congregation, was a striking proof of what may be effected, by proper pains, with this delightful portion of our public service, which is too often performed with disgraceful negligence.

In the country, as has been before stated, almost every summer's evening was spent by Mr. Hill in preaching in the villages around his residence. After an early dinner, his phaeton drove up to the door, and he used his equipage, not in the ostentatious vanities of the world, but to carry him to proclaim to the poor and the ignorant, the way of life and peace. The peasantry all knew his errand, and many of his hearers who kept horses, rode to the various places in which he was to preach. They greeted him on the road with a respectful and affectionate smile, and by the time he reached the spot selected for his sermon, he was not unfrequently attended by a considerable cavalcade. The poor bowed and curtsied as he went along, and sometimes a simple-hearted creature would cry out—"God bless you, sir, I wish you a good opportunity." When he came to the appointed village,

some honest farmer often claimed the privilege of providing a stable for his horses, and he commenced his labour of love, amidst the smiles and the prayers of many humble followers of the Saviour. In this respect, the latter part of his days presented a happy contrast to his early life. In one town, a horse dealer, who possessed considerable stable room, was determined to have the honour of providing for his horses, and no persuasion could induce the man to receive the slightest gratuity. The kindness he received, at times quite overpowered him, especially when he reflected on what he had suffered in his former days ; and on these occasions, his words were accompanied with an unction and feeling that melted the hearts of those who heard him. " O my dear hearers," he would say, " may the Lord bring home his own precious word to your souls ; may the sweet influences of divine grace inspire you with all the tenderness of a Saviour's love, and lay you low at the foot of his cross. Many a poor man makes a bright christian ; God keeps him humble, that he may dwell in his heart, and that the beams of his grace may shine in his life. I love the poor, the lowly believer. See yon evening star how bright it shines ; how pure, how gentle are its rays—but look, it is lower in the heavens, than those that sparkle with a restless twinkling, in the higher regions of the sky. God keeps you low that you may shine bright." Then he would suddenly change his image—" where do the rivers run that fertilize our soil—is it on the barren top of yonder hill ? No, in the vales beneath. If you would have the river, whose streams make glad the city of our God, to run through your hearts and enrich them to his glory, you must abide in the vale of humility." Simple ad-

dresses of this kind were understood and remembered by his poor hearers ; thus his ministry remained in their hearts, and his kindness engaged their affections.

The anxiety of Mr. Rowland Hill's mind at times, before he entered on the solemn work of preaching, was very remarkable. He seemed quite lost in reflection, and every now and then ejaculated in a low tone, " Lord help me to preach." On such occasions too, he was absent in the highest degree, and scarcely knew what did. A colonel in the Engineers, to whom his ministry had been made useful, was very anxious to be introduced to him. In the evening of the day on which they were made known to each other, Mr. Hill was going to preach at Woolwich, and asked his new acquaintance to accompany him in his phaeton. A favourite dog jumped into the carriage, and was suffered to go with them. The pious officer hoped for some conversation ; but his companion appeared unconscious of his presence, and went on whispering to himself the arrangement of his sermon, pulling at the same time the hairs out of the dog's back, and spreading them on the colonel's knee ! He was very much amused, with the absence of the minister for whom he had conceived so great a veneration, but said he was glad his train of thought was not interrupted, for such a sermon he had never heard before, as Mr. Hill preached that night.

His ascent of the pulpit stairs in his old age was most striking. His venerable figure, his slow and solemn step, the evident fulness of his mind wrapt up in his subject, his commanding air and perfect self-possession, combined to produce the feeling that his people often expressed, " it does us good if we



can only see him." As soon as he felt a Saviour's love when a boy, he rejoiced in proclaiming it to others, *despising the shame* ; and his only grief when the feebleness of age came upon him, was that he could not be a more laborious labourer in the vineyard of Christ.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *Religious Tract Society.*

IN the year 1799 Mr. Rowland Hill assisted in the formation of the Religious Tract Society. He was the chairman of its first committee, and always regarded this excellent institution as one of the most useful societies of the age. He contributed to it several interesting tracts, which have had a very extensive circulation.

The speeches of Mr. Hill at public meetings, were not less original, than the imagery of his sermons described in the last chapter. His addresses on these occasions were invariably short, and not unfrequently contained an innocent and witty philippic, against those long harangues by which the patience of hearers is so often exhausted. He used to tell the following droll story of what he said on one occasion. "His Royal Highness the Duke of —— was in the chair, and kindly desired me to sit next him. A man absolutely had the bad taste to spin out his dull tiresome *oratory* for more than an hour. Some of the people, tired to death, as well they might, went away. His Royal Highness whispered to me—'really Mr. Hill I do not think I can sit to hear such another speech as this;

I wish you would give one of your good natured hints about it.' It was my turn next; so I said 'may it please your Royal Highness, ladies, and gentlemen, I am not going to make either a long or a *moving* speech. The first is a rudeness; and the second is not required to-day, after the very *moving* one you have just heard—so *moving*, that several of the company have been *moved* by it out of the room—nay, I even fear, such another would so *move* his Royal Highness himself, that he would be unable to continue in the chair; and would, to the great regret of the meeting, be obliged to *move* off.' This tickled his Royal Highness and the assembly, and we had no more long speeches that day."

As he grew older, Mr. Rowland Hill's impatience of the length, at which some people venture to speak, did not at all diminish. The following reply to an invitation to preside at a meeting of the Tract Society, will shew his feeling on this subject; and if it operates as a hint to such as are more lengthy than luminous, on similar occasions, many a chairman, and many a hearer, will have reason to be glad that it was preserved to be inserted here.

*Wotton, Sept. 20, 1826.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

An old man, in the 83rd year of his age, ought to be a little provident of his remaining strength. You will say, no bodily strength can be needed, to sit quietly in a chair at a public meeting. True, but no small degree of mental patience is needed, while the poor chairman must sit it out for three hours at the least, to hear many a tiresome long speech (if they are not all of the same sort) without any remedy or

redress, upon the high *fidgets*, above half the time gaping and watching the clock. In most of these public meetings I have been tired down before they have been half over, and have been obliged to sheer off with the remains of my patience, and leave the finishing to others, while nothing but a short speech might have been expected from me.

In the way in which too many of these sort of meetings are now conducted, I have my fears, that many a good cause is injured by the means adopted for their support. Though some may be gratified by what may be said to the point, yet O the dulness, the *circumlocutiousness*, the conceit, the tautology, &c. &c. of others. In short, few know how to be pithy, short, and sweet. And as I find it very difficult to be pithy and sweet, my refuge at all times is to be short. Pity therefore a poor old man, and let him not be sentenced to suffer such a sort of pillory punishment, and try if you cannot persuade some other good tempered sinner to suffer in his stead.

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,  
ROWLAND HILL.

Mr. Jones,  
Religious Tract Society,  
Paternoster Row, London.

Mr. Rowland Hill's antipathy to long speeches was not stronger than his disgust at the unmeaning flourishes, which are too often introduced into sermons, to catch the vulgar ear, rather than to touch the sinner's heart. His remarks on this failing, though in an eccentric style, are well worthy of notice. "Fine affected flourishes," he says in a letter to a friend, "and unmeaning rant, are poor substitutes for

plain, simple, unaffected gospels truths ; yet such sort of preaching will have its admirers ; and it is surprising what strange stuff of different sorts will make up a popular preacher, insomuch that being registered in that number, should rather fill us with shame than with pride." Speaking of the spurious popularity of one individual, and of the crowds who were attracted by his declamatory and florid style, he observed—"they are quite tired of being hammered with the same threadbare old truths. They are for the man who can carry them away, upon the wings of his amazing oratory, up into the third heavens among the angels and archangels, and turn them into spiritual star-gazers at a single flight. They cannot bear any longer to be kept creeping on their knees, as poor sinners at the foot of the cross, while they have nothing to do but to catch hold of the tail of this wonderful fine spiritual kite, and fly away with him wherever he may choose to carry them." When once asked his opinion of the excitement produced by a well known preacher, he said, "this cannot last ; he is like a skyrocket that goes off blazing into the air ; but the dry stick soon falls to the ground, and is forgotten."

Probably one great cause of the usefulness of Mr. Rowland Hill's own preaching was his utter forgetfulness of self, when engaged in delivering his message to sinners. His warnings came from a heart awed with the terrors of the Lord, his descriptions of religious experience, were faithful delineations of the working of his own mind, and his invitations to Christ, were poured forth with all the tenderness of one who really yearned over souls. He expressed the desires, feelings, and recollections of the instant, so that even immediately after preaching, he did not remember

what he had said; and often has he declared, that he never reached the foot of the pulpit stairs, without the impression that he had not discharged his office as he ought. Hence, scarcely a Sunday passed without some notice of his success. One little slip of paper placed in his hands in the pulpit, is a very striking instance of deep conviction, in an individual who afterwards had much joy and peace in believing. It was written in a beautiful hand, and worded thus:—  
 “Will God indeed hear prayer for a hardened and impenitent sinner, who *would* mourn over his vileness, but *cannot*; who *longs* to approach his mercy-seat, and to draw near to the table of the Lord, but *dares not*; whose soul is darkness, and his heart cold within him! Oh! that Jesus would shine into his soul, and chase away the clouds of sin that involve it, that he may no longer go sighing all the day long, as they that have no hope, and no consolation.

‘Αγωνιζόμενος.’

The person who thus depicted the first workings of religion in his soul, was publicly invited to an interview in private with Mr. Hill. After a long delay, he came trembling to confer with his beloved pastor, who had the satisfaction of seeing him, at last, in the full enjoyment of the perfect love which casteth out fear.

The interest with which Mr. Rowland Hill watched the closing scenes of his converts, walking as it were by their side to the very gates of death, and considering the end of each of them as a memento of his own, is worthy the imitation of every minister. His calmness in the chamber of the dying, the tenderness with which he held forth the love of Jesus, as the only refuge of the expiring believer, and his composed and

solemn commendation of the soul to God, were wonderfully contrasted with his agitation, when he left the bedside of one he loved, but whom he was soon to lose. The emotions he had suppressed, often vented themselves on these occasions in tears, but oftener in a violent sickness, which would have alarmed a stranger, and was most distressing to his friends. Nor did his anxiety for his dying hearers end with the ebullition of his sorrow; he thought of them often, and sometimes composed hymns which he sent them.

The depth of Mr. Hill's piety, was never more perceptible than in his hymns. The one entitled "a Prayer for the Promised Rest" he considered as the best he ever wrote: it has been repeated with a holy joy, by many of his flock in the approach of death.

A PRAYER FOR THE PROMISED REST.

Dear friend of friendless sinners, hear,  
And magnify thy grace divine,  
Pardon a worm that would draw near,  
That would his heart to thee resign:  
A worm, by self and sin opprest,  
That pants to reach thy promised rest.

With holy fear, and reverend love,  
I long to lie beneath thy throne;  
I long in thee to live and move,  
And charge myself on thee alone,  
Teach me to lean upon thy breast,  
To find in thee, the promised rest.

Thou say'st thou wilt thy servants keep  
In perfect peace, whose minds shall be  
Like new born babes, or helpless sheep,  
Completely stay'd, dear Lord, on thee:  
How calm their state, how truly blest,  
Who trust on thee, the promis'd rest.



Take me, my Saviour, as thine own,  
And vindicate my righteous cause,  
Be thou my portion, Lord, alone,  
And bend me to obey thy laws ;  
In thy dear arms of love caress'd,  
Give me to find thy promis'd rest.

Bid the tempestuous rage of sin,  
With all its wrathful fury die ;  
Let the Redeemer dwell within,  
And turn my sorrows into joy,  
O may my heart, by thee possess'd,  
Know thee to be my promis'd rest.

It is time, however, that we pass on from these digressions to a more regular narration of events.

About the year 1800, Mr. Rowland Hill conceived the idea of composing his *Village Dialogues*, the character of which is too well known to need description in these pages. "Why, sir," it was remarked to him, "your dialogues make us laugh and cry in the same breath !" "To be sure," said he, "that is just what I did when I wrote them." "But, sir," you are scarcely justified, are you, in the satirical attack you have made upon the church ?" "What ! Attack upon the church ! I meant no such thing—why, how unreasonable it is to say so—look you, the hero of my piece is a clergyman of the most truly evangelical character."

The preface to the dialogues informs us, that the author's chief adviser, during the progress of the work, was the excellent Mr. Ambrose Serle. The letters of this able and pious man on the subject, will be read with great interest by those acquainted with the *Village Dialogues*. The first is as follows :—

*James Street, 26th May, 1801.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

You must have thought me extremely rude, by my long omission to acknowledge the receipt of your friendly letter; but the fact is, I have been absent from town on public business, for these last five weeks, two days excepted, and therefore could not avoid the delay.

The little tracts on which you condescend to ask my opinion, though your own knowledge and experience must have rendered you a far more competent judge than I am, do certainly contain many great, solid, and fundamental truths, which no man can dispute, without bringing into doubt the reality of his own faith and hope as a christian; and I conceive it to be my duty earnestly to pray, that the widest dissemination of those evangelical principles, consonant as they are to the articles and homilies of the established church, may take place throughout the world. But I conclude that not the principles themselves, but the *manner* in which they are offered, have raised a difficulty among your friends. I own, with respect to myself (though I have formerly been a defaulter) that the grave and the solemn subjects of death, and hell, and a judgment to come, with all that relates to God and the salvation of man, seem to require a weighty seriousness of spirit, thoroughly impressed with a humble, awful sense of matters most indisputably momentous and sublime; but I cannot dare absolutely to condemn a more lively frame of mind in others than I can choose to allow in myself, because I have seen the blessing of God co-operating with writing and discourses, abounding with sallies of high vivacity and genius, which

perhaps persons of a reserved or melancholy temper, not warranted, however, by religion, which is joy and peace in itself, might be inclined to dislike or refuse. Spiritual hilarity, too, may have its exorbitances as well as the natural; and this ease of heart often exposes men, otherwise humble and serious, to cheerful sensations, by no means accommodated to people under trials, anxieties, or temptations. The case, therefore, must be left to God, with due allowance for the peculiar turns of the human mind, which grace does not alter, but improve, and which vary in almost every person we meet with; and these, when the great points are correct, become a proper subject for mutual charity and forbearance among christians.

Possibly, some of your friends may be offended, at what they suppose an implied censure upon the great body of the ministers of the established church. I bewail the melancholy fact, however, that too many such ministers as Mr. Dolittle are in the establishment, who act and speak more as men of the world, than a heathen can allow to be consistent with the christian profession. I lament, too, that such unfit and unworthy men are not, or cannot be turned out of it. But I rejoice, at the same time, that there is in our day "a great company of the priests" who have truly believed, who are sedulous in their respective stations, who are highly instrumental in turning many from darkness to light, and whose lives and conversations are an ornament to their profession, and examples to their flocks. Between these two very different sorts of people, I am sure you will think with me, that a strong and broad line of distinction should, in every discussion relative to the duty of the function, be constantly and eminently drawn. Justice and truth, as well as the edification of souls, do forcibly require it.

The bottom of the page reminds me, that I am trespassing upon the indulgence you have allowed; and therefore I will only add my hearty prayers that the Lord of life and glory, in whose name you stand among the children of men, may direct and bless all your labours to the end for which you stand up at all—the salvation of souls by Jesus Christ. I beg to be remembered in the same by you, and remain,

Rev. and dear sir, your friend

and servant in one common Lord,

AMBROSE SERLE.

Rev. Rowland Hill.

In August, 1801, Mr. Ambrose Serle again wrote to Mr. Rowland Hill on the style of his *Village Dialogues*, and the humorous incidents with which they abound.

*James Street, 14th August, 1801.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Your last favor came to my hands in the north, as I was travelling on public business.

Though I have not had the pleasure of seeing the last dialogues you mention, I am persuaded that you have no object in their publication but spiritual edification; and whether this object can be attained by lively sallies or graver attempts, is a matter which, I own, depends so much upon the blessing of God, that I feel it to be a kind of hazard in me to say any thing positively upon it. There appears, however, a real distinction between pleasantry and levity, though this distinction, considering the different humours, and, consequently, the different opinions of men, cannot casily be so marked, so as to define always where one ends and

the other begins. Gloomy tempers are prone to censure (and especially upon subjects of a serious and solemn nature) the least departure from which particularly suits them. People of more cheerful dispositions can be pleased ; nay, I believe, can be advantaged, by lively expressions and representations of the most sacred and important truths. I remember to have heard, that once, in a large company assembled on some particular occasion, two ministers, strangers to each other, were invited to meet ; the one, a man of great wit and vivacity like yourself ; and the other, of a melancholic turn, rendered, perhaps, still more melancholic by repeated trials and sufferings. The pleasant man indulged his vein, and frequently excited a degree of mirth in the circle about him : the other, surprised at what appeared to him a conduct quite out of order, sat in silence, wrapt up in reserve. Towards the breaking up of the company, the cheerful minister was called upon to be the voice of the rest in prayer to God, in which exercise his soul was so carried out in sublime communion, and the most ardent excitations of spiritual life and love, that it seemed a flame from heaven, diffused and enkindled in the hearts of all about him. When they arose, the dear melancholic man went up to him, with tears streaming from his eyes, and addressed him to the following purpose :—  
“ My dear brother, forgive me, I beseech you. Here have I been for this whole afternoon, condemning you as a person of a light and frothy mind, talking utterly unworthy, not only of a christian minister, but of a christian man ; but I see, and confess, from what God has done in you, and enabled you to utter in prayer before him, and in the presence of this company, that the fault is all my own, and that gloominess of mind is

no necessary part of true religion, nor cheerfulness of mind an enemy to it." Having said this, he cordially embraced his no less affectionate brother with mutual tears of joy. Excuse this story.

With my hearty prayers, that the Lord may bless all your labours for the edification of souls, and for his own glory by Christ Jesus,

I remain, dear sir,

Your friend and obedient servant,

AMBROSE SERLE.

The Village Dialogues have passed through thirty editions, and have been translated into some of the languages of the continent. The rural dialects which abound in them, are those of the West of England, with which Mr. Rowland Hill was most familiar; and in the midst of matter of almost every kind, they certainly contain some beautiful descriptions of the effect of real piety, on men of every class, as well as scenes of the most affecting pathos. He utterly denied, that "when a bad minister or character had been held forth as a proper example for reproof," it was intended by him for a "*sweeping* charge," without any discrimination, and frequently asserted, that he had no intention of attacking the church by any such descriptions: on the contrary, his declared design was to shew, in some of his characters, the value and great usefulness of its devoted and laborious clergy. How far he took the steps most likely to effect such an object, must be left to the various opinions of the readers of the work; and it is fairly questionable, whether some of the scenes described in it may not have a tendency, to produce an impression on the mind very opposite to his real design. Still there is every reason

to believe, that they have been instrumental in awakening numbers of careless and irreligious people ; frequent instances having occurred, of persons dating their conversion from the perusal of this book. Thus the undoubted purity of his object has been owned of God.

It would not be right, in a life of Mr. Rowland Hill, to leave unnoticed some dialogues of a very different description, from those to which reference has been just made. Contrary to the advice of his sincerest friends, and to the urgent entreaties even of many dissenters, he persisted in publishing his "*Sale of Curates.*" The consequence was that anticipated by almost every person of discretion—his exclusion from the numerous pulpits of the establishment into which he had been previously admitted. His popularity, and the well known excellence of all his purposes, made him the welcome assistant of a great number of clergy, wherever he found it convenient and agreeable ; but after this book was circulated, they considered it impossible any more to invite his services ; the more especially, as in many instances it would have been in opposition to the will of their ecclesiastical superiors. He certainly regretted, at last, that it was ever printed, and said, "I wish I could buy it up." It was one of the mistakes of a long and laborious life, in which there was so much to illumine the page of his history, that after these remarks, which fidelity requires, we may pass on to contemplate his happier and wiser efforts, for the spread of divine truth. The current of his ardent and inventive mind, sometimes overflowed the limits which reason and religion prescribed for its course, diffusing itself in shallows, and injuring the very soil he had most assiduously cultivated ; but it oftener ran within its proper bounds, conveying fresh-



ness and fertility to every scene through which it passed.

At the commencement of the present century, there was scarcely an event of religious interest, with which Mr. Hill was not in some degree connected. Men employed in disseminating the truth over the continent of Europe, and missionaries in various parts of the world, seemed to delight in reporting to him the tidings of their success, or in opening to his sympathising breast, all their cares, dangers, and sufferings. He thought consistency at home the great secret of usefulness abroad; and with a view to the correction of worldly conformity, in many who professed the name of Christ in our own land, he published his "Warning to Professors." Allusion to it has been made before in these pages; but it is mentioned to introduce some admirable remarks of Mr. Serle, who says, in a letter to Mr. Rowland Hill, "I have read over the 'Warning' with much delight. It is a publication that has long been wanted among us; and there is a life, and spirit, as well as a seriousness, in the composition, which, in the Lord's hand, cannot fail, I think, of making deep impression. I have been praying over it, that the Divine Spirit may accompany this most necessary tract with his efficacious blessing, and that thousands now living, and tens of thousands yet unborn, may receive counsel, edification, and *full correction* respecting those worldly conformities, and carnal (I might say devilish) snares, which in all ages are, and have been, laid for the entanglement of professors. Every true believer will rejoice in your work. The opinion of nominal christians, however specious and sensible they may appear in eyes like their own, is not worth a moment's attention. The Lord make

us good non-conformists to the world, and then the world may deride us as they please. A little of their slander and opposition will cause professors to *mind*, as well as to *mend* their ways ; for while the men of the earth are watching over their conduct, they will be more zealously induced to look up for wisdom and strength from above, that their feet may be kept from falling, and that they may glorify the Lord more and more in their lives and conversations. Once more accept my thanks for this most seasonable and powerful publication."

Mr. Hill was very vigilant over the consistency of the members of his own chapel. "The city of London," he says, in his "Warning," "may be compared to a great wilderness ; we seldom know how our next neighbour lives. I have therefore found great utility in announcing, on three different occasions, before all the communicants, the names and the abode of those who wish more statedly to join the communion. They are next regularly registered, that we may call for them whenever necessity requires : after this they receive such frequent charges, as that they know *all conformity to the world is totally prohibited among us*. By this plan, considering the very imperfect state of things, though we do not suppose that all is gold that glitters, yet, comparatively speaking, the disgraceful characters have been but few. Thus things have, with a little attention, been most comfortably managed, while the most pleasant peace and harmony universally prevails." Indeed the communicants at Surry chapel, thus carefully watched over, have ever been remarkable for a conduct of admirable purity, happily untainted by the ascetic or morose.

This era of Mr. Rowland Hill's life was marked

by the ever memorable event of the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, an institution which he cherished in its rise, and whose principles he defended in all the trying scenes through which it has passed. The first members of it were amongst his most esteemed friends, and its president, Lord Teignmouth, was connected by marriage with the Hill family. It was at the suggestion of the bishop of London, that Lord Teignmouth was proposed in the committee, by Mr. Owen, as president of the Bible Society, and the proposition was instantly seconded by Mr. Rowland Hill, who had the happiness of being thus instrumental in placing, at the head of that truly admirable body, one of the most judicious and excellent noblemen that could have been selected for such an important office. Never was any man more entirely given up to the cause of truth than Mr. Hill, and all the energies of his mind, and the powers of his body, were voluntarily offered to the Lord as his reasonable and willing service. As each successive formation of auxiliary associations gave additional strength to the Bible Society, he seemed filled with a glow of interest and delight. When the news first arrived of the meeting at Cambridge, he was just about to sit down to dinner, which he finished with the utmost haste, and would scarcely wait the removal of the cloth, before he said to the author of these memoirs, then a boy spending the holidays at his house,—“now read me every word of these speeches.” His ecstasy was so great, that expressions of the most pure delight burst every moment from his lips. “O what a change since I was at the University—the Lord he praised, the Lord he praised.” To the immortal honour of Trinity College, the master and seniors of that learned

body presented a donation of fifty guineas to the Bible Society, on the day of the Nation's Jubilee, a proper homage to that blessed book which must be our ladder to true learning, even unto gray hairs, and the mystery of whose truths, both literate and illiterate, can only know by the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

On the discovery of vaccination by Dr. Jenner, Mr. Rowland Hill eagerly embraced this new means of conferring a benefit on his fellow creatures. "This" he said, "is the very thing for me;" and wherever he went to preach, he announced after his sermon "I am ready to vaccinate to-morrow morning, as many children as you choose, and if you wish them to escape that horrid disease, the small-pox, you will bring them." Once a week he innoculated the children who were brought to him from Wotton and the neighbourhood; and it is well known, that one of the most effective vaccine boards in London was established, and still continues in operation at Surry chapel.

When vaccinating children, Mr. Rowland Hill seemed quite in his element, talking kindly to the parents, and coaxing the little frightened creatures in the most good natured manner. In a few years, the numbers innoculated by him amounted to more than ten thousand, and in most of the cases he was particularly successful. Dr. Jenner was a person of very animated conversation, with a remarkably kind disposition; and although he did not fully participate in Mr. Hill's religious views and feelings, he had the highest veneration for his character, and was a frequent attendant on his ministry at Cheltenham. Dr. Jenner seemed at times forcibly struck with the deep tone of his friend's piety and glowing anticipations of happiness, in a spiritual state of being. Mr. Hill once

introduced him to a nobleman in these terms : " allow me to present to your lordship my friend Dr. Jenner, who has been the means of saving more lives than any other man." Dr. Jenner bowed, and said with great earnestness, " Ah ! would I, like you, could say *souls*."

The ministry of Mr. Rowland Hill, in middle age, was made very useful to some of the Gloucestershire farmers, amongst whom pleasing instances of conversion, and a total change of habits and manners took place. These persons were remarkable examples of the power of religion, on previously ill-cultivated minds. The frost of selfishness, by which all the softer faculties of their souls had formerly been congealed, dissolved under the melting influences of the love of God, and the simple graces of true piety, flowed forth in streams of active benevolence. Such is the character of Farmer Littleworth in the *Village Dialogues*, which was drawn from what the author himself had witnessed in his own flock. One individual in particular, presented as striking an instance of the efficacy of religion, as can be conceived. He was in his youth, an attendant upon every scene of rural dissipation within his reach ; a fighter, a horse racer, a midnight rioter in fairs and revels. Grace changed his heart and his life, so that he became a true and zealous servant of the Lord Jesus Christ ; peaceful, diligent, industrious, generous. He frequently described the happiness he enjoyed in the service of God, contrasting it with his stings of conscience when he lived in sin. " When I used to go," he said, " to all kind of fairs, and revels, and horse races, I was never happy. As I was coming home through the woods at night, the rustling of a leaf would frighten me ;

terrified by I know not what, fleeing when no man pursued, I galloped home as fast as my horse could carry me. Now, if I go to visit a poor dying man, or if I have been enjoying the word of life, I come home in a calm and peaceful frame of mind. I find that the Lord is present with me; and as *I walk my horse gently along*, I look up and see the bright stars above my head, and enjoy the assurance that the God who made them all, is mine in Christ. O what a mercy!—the loneliness of the wood, the rustling of the leaves, the stillness of night, no longer alarm me—I am, I trust, reconciled to my God, and at peace with him and my own conscience, through the death of his son. He that fills the heavens with his glory, and the earth with his mercies, condescends to dwell in, and to comfort my poor sinful heart.” Mr. Rowland Hill had a great regard for this excellent man. He had naturally a fervent spirit; and sometimes as he looked at his venerable minister, a tear stole down his cheek, when he remembered that he was the first messenger of comfort to his soul. This pious farmer knew the state of mind, and inquired into the temporal wants of every poor man in his employ; and it may be truly said, the Lord was with him in his business, for it always seemed to prosper.

On November 28th, 1808, Mr. Rowland Hill lost his affectionate brother Sir Richard Hill, who was succeeded in his title and estates by his brother Mr. John Hill, the father of Lord Hill, and the other brave soldiers before-mentioned. A handsome addition to the income of Mr. Rowland Hill, was left him by his deceased brother, and he immediately increased his charities in proportion to his augmented means. He was perpetually endeavouring to extend the limits of

his usefulness, and began to turn his thoughts towards the introduction of the gospel into Cheltenham, then rapidly rising to its present high estimation, as a place of fashionable resort. Cheltenham was some years ago little more than a village, till the discovery of its mineral waters attracted many persons from a distance. The parish church being totally unequal to their accommodation, Mr. Hill, in conjunction with some good men in the neighbourhood, conceived the plan of erecting a chapel there, to which it was hoped the visitors would be attracted. Had there then existed the present ample and excellent provision for the spiritual wants of its inhabitants and others, he would not have interfered; and no person rejoiced more sincerely than Mr. Hill, in his old age, at the zeal of the clergy who presided over the large congregations in that place. By his influence, subscriptions were soon raised, to erect a handsome and commodious place of worship, in which he was zealously assisted by a gentleman residing in the town. Another of his coadjutors in this work was his friend O. P. Wathen, Esq. of Woodchester, near Stroud, to whom he thus mentioned his intention. "I suppose you have heard of our design to build a large chapel at Cheltenham, upon the plan of ours at Surry chapel; the church service to be adopted, and the pulpit open to evangelical ministers of all denominations. This event will probably call me more frequently to visit your part of the country." The first stone was laid in the year 1808, by Mr. Rowland Hill, who preached on the occasion to a large assembly, and in the autumn of 1809 it was completed, and opened for divine service. Whenever Mr. Hill visited Cheltenham, the building was crowded to excess, and he continued to preach in



it occasionally, to vast congregations, and with great popularity, till within a year of his death. From this pulpit he preached some of his finest sermons ; and his dignified appearance, energy of manner, and widely extended fame, attracted persons of every rank, not a few of whom greatly profited by the truths they heard.

In the midst of all Mr. Rowland Hill's numerous engagements, it was delightful to watch his innocent relaxations. His garden was to him a source of perpetual enjoyment, and he prided himself on his successful cultivation of flowers. On arriving from a long and fatiguing journey, he seldom went into the house till the borders were examined, and notice taken of the progress of the plants in his absence. The strawberries, melons, and fruit trees, were brought to great perfection under his own special superintendence. Three or four times, in a warm summer's morning, he would quit his study to gather rose leaves for a *pot-pourri*, a supply of which, prepared by his own hands, he was very proud of offering to his visitors. After dinner, while some person read aloud, he was busily occupied in making nets for his fruit trees or fish ponds ; and if he took a walk in the evening, it must be with an odometer to measure the distance from the house at Wotton, to some place in the vicinity. He also had his *pets* of the animal creation, and often exhibited the tricks which he had taught them, with a humour belonging to himself alone. Still in the midst of all his amusements, religion appeared admirably predominant, visibly qualifying his every pursuit, and gently restraining the redundances, of one of the most active and original dispositions ever implanted in man.

## CHAPTER X.

### *My own recollections of Mr. Rowland Hill.*

I HAVE hitherto given such a history of the life of Mr. Rowland Hill, as I could collect from my remembrance of what he has told me himself of his extraordinary career, and from the interesting documents which he bequeathed to me. As I have never passed a year without spending some portion of it with him, I think I shall be enabled to convey to those interested in his memoirs, a more complete view of his unique character, by bringing before them in the first person, my recollections of his public engagements, and the pleasing developement of his amiable and cheerful qualities, in the retirement of his own family. Surrounded as he was by persons of every description, it was necessary that he should be somewhat reserved, except to a few individuals who possessed his confidence. Numbers fancied they knew him well, because he was courteous, polite, and cheerful, in the presence of every person of whom he entertained a good opinion; but though the readiness of his wit and humour caused him to converse in an apparently unrestrained manner with many, very few were acquainted with the movements of his mind, or the events of his

early days. Some presumed upon his kindness; but he bore their forwardness with patience, for the sake of doing good, and because he believed it arose from ignorance. If once his suspicions were awakened and confirmed, those he had detected in doing wrong, seldom sought a second interview with him. Many years ago, an individual who had done discredit to a profession of religion, was standing at his door, just as he was going out, and greeted him with "How do you do, Mr. Hill, I am delighted to see you once more." He made no answer; but with an air of perfect amazement, exclaimed, "What! arn't you hanged yet?" and returned to the house till the astonished visitor departed. He was so well known by name, to every description of person, that applications of all kinds were made to him; and I have witnessed some such scenes at Surry chapel house, as I think were never to be met with in any other place. I well remember one morning the footman ushered in a most romantic looking lady. She advanced with measured steps, and with an air that caused Mr. Hill to retreat towards the fire-place. She began,

"Divine shepherd"—

"'Pon my word, ma'am!"

"I hear you have great influence with the royal family."

"Well, ma'am, and did you hear any thing else?"

"Now seriously, sir—my son has the most wonderful poetic powers. Sir, his poetry is of a sublime order—noble, original, fine"—

"Well, I wonder what will come next," muttered Mr. Hill, in a low tone.

"Yes, sir, pardon the liberty, and therefore I called to ask you to get him made *Poet Laureate*."

"Ma'am, you might as well ask me to get him made archbishop of Canterbury!"

The mother of the poetic genius withdrew, looking highly indignant at the fit of laughter it was impossible to suppress.

At times the knocker of Mr. Rowland Hill's door had literally no rest from morning till night; and nothing could exceed the good humour, with which he submitted to every species of interruption. Foreigners, all sorts of mendicants, candidates for the ministry—in short, almost every person who called, found him ready to listen to their cases. These were sometimes, like that which has been just described, not a little singular. One evening after dinner, his servant said, "Sir, a foreign gentleman wishes to speak to you." "Well, shew him in," said Mr. Hill, and there entered a tall mustachoeed man, who addressed him with,

"Meester Hill, I have heard you are a wonderful great, goot man—can do any ting."

"Mercy on us! then I must be a wonderful man indeed."

"Yes, sare, so you are a very wonderful man; so I call to ask you to *make my ambassador do his duty by me.*"

"Sir, I can assure you I have not the honour of knowing him."

"Oh, sare, but he regard a letter from you."

"Sir, I can have no possible influence with him, and cannot take the liberty of writing to him, on a subject about which I know nothing."

"But sare, I will tell you"—

Finding his applicant inclined to be pertinacious, he concluded the business by saying—

“Well sir, you may give my compliments to the ambassador, and say, that *I advise him to do his duty* ; and that will do as well as writing.”

“Very goot, sare—goot day.”

The unreasonable requests to which Mr. Hill was continually subject are almost incredible ; and the patience with which he bore them all, was truly surprising. Numerous stories of his sayings on such occasions, have been widely circulated, many of which originated in the imaginations of the inventors. I do not recollect a single instance of his losing his temper, when annoyed in this manner ; nor do I ever remember him to have given way to uncontrolled irritability, under the most trying excitement. In this respect he was, in the retirement of his family, a happy example of the precepts he so forcibly inculcated in his public ministrations.

In the winter of 1810-11 Mr. Rowland Hill took a very active part in a contested election, and engaged in the canvass, with all the energy of his persevering character. He never more fully experienced the effects of his unbounded popularity, than on this occasion. Wherever he appeared, he was greeted with enthusiasm, and had the greatest difficulty in preventing the populace from taking the horses out of his carriage, and drawing him themselves. This was the only time in my remembrance, that he was occupied in an active political canvass, for which he considered there were good reasons : he ever afterwards declined to interfere. As was to be expected, this deviation from his usual course was the cause of many remarks, which he generally suffered to pass unnoticed ; but on one of the days of the poll, he happened to be seated at table with a young man who observed, in rather a

sarcastic tone, "really the *Methodists* make excellent canvassers."—

Mr. Hill, roused in an instant, said "I consider myself singularly fortunate in having met you to-day, as I shall now obtain a *correct* definition of a term I never knew the real meaning of. Pray allow me to ask you to tell me what a *Methodist* is."

"Indeed, Mr. Hill, I beg your pardon, I did not remember you were present, when I made use of the word."

"I cannot say that your apology at all lessens my right to ask the question, as you have now made the expression personal to myself."

"O no, no, no, indeed."

"Well, but as I presume a person of your education and ability is not accustomed to use language you do not know the meaning of, I still for the sake of information beg leave to press my question."

"Why in truth I—I—I—cannot exactly say."

"Then allow me, as an old man, to give a little wholesome advice to you, as a young one—never again, particularly in a large company, make use of words the signification of which you do not understand, and cannot explain."

I heard Mr. Rowland Hill give an account of this conversation, when he added—"we met the next day for all this, and were as good friends as ever: I only gave him a little proper counsel." Mr. Hill certainly felt the young man's observation very acutely, and his resolution never to come forward again in a similar way, is a proof that he thought it unadvisable for a minister, to be carried out of the path of higher and spiritual pursuits, by the force of any temporal excitement. The messenger of the gospel becomes the truest pa-

triot, when he is most diligently employed in winning his fellow countrymen to the religion of Christ Jesus, whose precepts, obeyed from the heart, are the firmest pillars of the social system, and the surest antidote to anarchy or misrule.

In the summer and autumn of 1811 Mr. Rowland Hill's thoughts were much occupied by an attempt to rate his chapel in Blackfriars' road, which I shall notice hereafter, and by the affairs of his cause at Cheltenham. In a letter to the Rev. G. Clayton, he speaks thus of the work that was going on in the latter place. "You will be happy to hear, that the cause at Cheltenham continues to prosper exceedingly. In the morning we are completely filled without a crowd: in the evening, in general, we nearly overflow, while some are kept away through the excessive heat of the place. God's word shall not return to him void, and I am persuaded much good is to be done, where prejudice is removed, and a serious attention is given to the word of life." With regard to his mode of managing the services, he remarks in the same letter,—“the economy of the chapel I trust, also, is well contrived to increase unity and peace throughout the christian church at large. While the public are accommodated with that mode of worship, which is most congenial with their educational prejudices, they will have an opportunity of finding that christian ministers of various denominations, are all so happily united in all the essential doctrines of the gospel, as gives the happiest evidences of the unity of the christian church, notwithstanding some little differences, scarcely worthy to be thought of, among those that are really one in Christ.”

In the autumn of 1811 Mr. Rowland Hill met with a severe accident. He was riding his favourite cream-



coloured horse "Bob" through a steep and rugged road, as the nearest way to a village in a neighbouring valley, where he was going to preach. The animal stumbled against one of the many large stones scattered over the narrow way, and fell with his whole weight on Mr. Hill. Being of a most gentle and docile nature, he lay quiet till his rider was extricated from his perilous situation, when the latter was found to be much bruised and to have broken two of his ribs. He was confined for some weeks to his bed; but his cheerfulness never forsook him, though before he arose, a severe inflammation settled in his right eye. Not being able to preach, Mr. Hill remained at Wotton till towards Christmas, when the state of his eye became so alarming, that he went to London to consult the celebrated Mr. Ware. I travelled with him on that occasion. We were two days on the road; he was mostly silent and dejected, complaining of great pain, till I remarked "there is Eton, sir." He then seemed to forget his sufferings, and talked to me, in the kindest manner, of his religious feelings when a boy there, accompanied with beautiful remarks on the dedication of our youth to God, and the pleasures of the remembrance of having spent it in his service. On arriving in London, before we went to Surry chapel, he drove to the house of Mr. Ware, and received all the kindness and attention for which that eminent oculist was so justly esteemed. When he reached his own residence, he rose into a frame of the most exalted piety, and walked up and down the room, breathing forth resignation to his chastening Father's will, in all the fervour of a sanctified use of affliction. A minister present observed, "I never saw him in a more holy state of mind:"—in truth the Lord was with him in

the furnace, and all that the fire destroyed, were the ties which had bound him too closely to earth, and to himself. "God," said he, "has laid me on one side, has incapacitated me for his work to humble me, to make me feel that I am nothing in his cause, and that I may more justly value the privilege of labouring for his glory." The skill of Mr. Ware was at length made the means of restoring him to his beloved people. I shall never forget his first return to the pulpit, on his recovery, nor the expression of happy welcome which beamed on the faces of a numerous and affectionate congregation.

In the summer after his restoration to his ministerial duties, I had the pleasure to accompany him and Mrs. Hill to Cheltenham. When there, he was followed by visitors of every rank, to whose accommodation in the chapel, the most polite attention was paid by the trustees. He much enjoyed the morning walk at the wells, and received great benefit from the waters; but the pleasures of the place did not tempt him to relax in his usual routine of weekly village preaching. This will appear, from a letter to his friend Mr. Wathen announcing his intended plan. He says, "Mrs. Hill has promised to go with me to Cheltenham, and we are to take young Sidney with us, to shew him the place. In consequence of this, we shall travel all the way in our own carriage, and shall hope to be with you at your dinner hour on Saturday, the 4th of July, which I suppose must not be late, as we shall afterwards have to go to Cheltenham in the evening. Though by this plan I shall not need the offer of your carriage, yet it need not prevent the kind design of your attending us to that place. I should rather hope it would forward your intention, as we shall have a

spare place in our carriage, that you may travel with us. You know we are to return, if lives be spared, on the Wednesday, that I may preach at Rodborough, and Ebley on the Thursday, and perhaps at Painswick on the Friday, and return to Cheltenham on the Saturday." Though his weak eye suffered from the heat of the crowded chapels, he would preach; no illness that did not actually confine him to the house, no remonstrance could prevent it, and frequently after sitting silent and wrapt up in thought, he was heard to say indistinctly to himself "O that I could do more for my God, O that I could bring more souls to Christ: Lord help." Every walk in the grounds of his friends, every hill he climbed to enjoy some romantic view, every event seemed to furnish gleanings for his sermons. His mind turned all the incidents of life to the account of his work, in which it was evident to those who were witnesses of his zeal, that no man ever engaged with more heartfelt earnestness, to bring souls to a true concern for their eternal salvation. His playful, guileless mind ran innocently, and often sportively on the surface of the earth; but far more frequently did it soar on the wings of devotion, into regions above this world, expanding itself in the praise and service of the God of heaven.

Towards the year 1813, the conspicuous part which his nephews took in the great and warlike deeds of the peninsula, in addition to their vast importance, caused Mr. Rowland Hill to feel and to express no ordinary interest, in the tidings of battles and victory, that were perpetually reaching those who were at a distance from all the horrors and massacre of war. The exploits and services of Sir Rowland Hill in Spain, have been rewarded by due fame and honours,

and his kindness and attention to the troops under his command, by which he obtained the immortal name of "the soldier's friend," are still fresh in the grateful recollections of many a brave fellow whom he led to victory. The town of Shrewsbury,<sup>1</sup> to mark its sense of the honour he had brought to his native county, returned him to parliament in 1812, and his brother, the late Colonel Hill, represented him on that occasion, and was chaired for him. Involved as he was in all the changes and perils of an arduous warfare, and engaged in harassing responsibilities, Sir Rowland Hill lost no opportunity of assuring his uncle, Mr. Rowland Hill, of his sincere esteem, and of communicating to him from time to time, accounts of the difficulties he had encountered and surmounted. Firmness and kindness, accompanied by the highest military talents, were the qualities which inspired the confidence, and ensured the affection, of all connected with this gallant officer. Persons coming from Spain at this period, used frequently to call at Surry chapel house, with such tidings as they knew would be interesting to Mr. Hill, or if they had been the bearers of letters to his nephew, to express, in terms of the warmest gratitude, their sense of the way in which he had received them. There were several soldiers under Sir Rowland Hill's command, who had been hearers of his uncle, who enquired after their welfare, from his nephew, with all the affectionate anxiety of a pastor for the members of his flock. Sir Rowland's answers were given, in a manner that clearly explained the cause of the devotion to their general, which was so often expressed by the brave men under his com-

<sup>1</sup> The splendid column erected afterwards to Lord Hill, is known to every traveller on the great Irish road.

mand. In one of his letters to Mr. Rowland Hill, he says, "I hope my aunt received a note I wrote some weeks ago, to inform her that the soldier she inquired about was well;" and I recollect a poor soldier's wife telling Mrs. Hill, "O ma'am, we all respect Sir Rowland Hill for his kindness to us." An officer from Spain, once came to the house at Surry chapel, to bring Mr. Hill some intelligence of his nephews, who said, "Sir, your nephew, Sir Rowland Hill's calmness and self-possession are the admiration of the whole army. He never loses them for an instant, in the most trying situations. I was near him a short time ago, when he came up to an elevated spot, to order a piece of cannon to be placed on it. He spoke as coolly as if he had been in a room; and though the shot flew about him like hail, he was perfectly unruffled." When such honourable mention of his nephew, was made to Mr. Rowland Hill in conversation, or read by him in the papers, his eyes filled with tears of pleasure, mingled with the apprehension that the next news might be, that he had lost him in the hour of his military glory. A kind providence, however, spared him this sorrow: the hero lived to wear the laurels he so bravely won, and to add, by every species of kindness, to the comfort of his venerable relation in his last days. When the brilliant illuminations took place to celebrate the victories of our arms, Mr. Rowland Hill placed a transparency in the front of Surry chapel, which attracted much attention. At the head of it two hands held, on a scroll, the words—"the tyrant is fallen." Under this came a quotation from Obadiah, iii, 4, *The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in*

*his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.* To this was added, *Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth:* Ps. ii, 10. The subject of the painting, was the sun setting on the sea, exhibiting on the shore, to the left, a lion couching at the foot of a fortress near the trophies of war; and to the right, a lamb lying by the implements of agriculture, with a village church, and a cottage before him.

At the conclusion of the peninsular war, Mr. Rowland Hill had the satisfaction to see his nephew advanced to the peerage, and to witness the honours with which he was welcomed, on his return to his native country. Soon after his arrival, he took me with him one morning to Lord Hill's hotel in Hanover-square. He was at breakfast, surrounded by his companions in arms, who seemed much interested in the lively conversation of Mr. Hill. After breakfast, Lord Hill went with us to see a picture of the Duke of Wellington, surrounded by a group of military officers, whom he had commanded in Spain. Before entering the carriage, Lord Hill, struck with the beauty of the horses, stopped to admire them, which was quite to the humour of Mr. Hill, who prided himself not a little on their appearance and docility. It was a day of great gratification to me as a boy; but no youth could have enjoyed it more than my aged and indulgent relative.

In addition to the other honours conferred upon Lord Hill, the city of London had voted him a sword, which was presented to him on the same day, a similar mark of distinction was given to Lord Beresford.



Mr. Rowland Hill was invited to Guildhall, and good naturedly allowed me to accompany him. His witty and original conversation, attracted those around him who were assembled in the waiting room ; and never did he manifest a more redundant flow of spirits. In placing the sword in the hands of Lord Hill, the chamberlain alluded to the fact, that a Sir Rowland Hill of his family, was the first protestant lord mayor of London. As soon as Mr. Rowland Hill presented himself at the door of the Guildhall, the populace, who had been shaking hands with, and cheering Lord Hill, cried out "here comes the good old uncle," and followed him by loud huzzas as he departed. He could not help contrasting these expressions of respect, with the contempt, obloquy, persecution, and personal insults, of which he was the daily subject at the commencement of his ministry. Once, on the terrace at Hawkestone, about this time, he remarked to a lady who was walking with him, and who had witnessed the affectionate attentions which were paid him by Sir John Hill and his family—"You have seen how I am now received here ; but in my youth I have often paced this spot bitterly weeping ; while, by most of the inhabitants of yonder house, I was considered as a disgrace to my family. But," he added, the tears trickling down his aged cheeks, "it was for the cause of my God." The motives which ever actuated his conduct, were a sincere desire for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and a love for souls ; and the course he pursued, arose chiefly from the advice of others, and the circumstances of the times. His services, offered in the integrity of his heart, were accepted ; and even in this life, he received the full accomplishment of the promises of Christ, to those who leave all to follow him.



The honours which had been won by the relatives of Mr. Rowland Hill, the high estimation into which his own character had risen, and the respect shewn him by all ranks of persons, might have had the effect of endearing him, in his declining days, too closely to this world, had it not pleased God in his wise providence to counteract these dangers, by the visitation of his chastising hand in sickness. A few months after the excitement caused by the presence of the sovereigns and others, who had contributed to the overthrow of Napoleon, and the scenes of gratification in which, by his connection with some of the heroes of the peninsula, he had been necessarily involved, Mr. Hill was attacked by a severe and painful disease. This happened about the usual time of his returning from Wotton to London. His friends became seriously alarmed, and were anxious to bring him to town as soon as possible, that he might have the benefit of the medical skill of the metropolis. His feelings under sickness are thus expressed by himself, in a letter to one of the members of Surry chapel: "My days, must be nearly ended, and consequently my life is comparatively of little worth. Still may the languid efforts of my declining days prove not an unacceptable offering before him, by whose divine power our weakest efforts may be crowned with the most abundant success. At present however, I am obliged to give way to disease, and though perhaps nothing dangerous, yet exceedingly painful and lowering to the constitution. Yesterday I suffered severely, and to-day am very feverish, weak, and low, and how I shall be able to accomplish my journey to town, as yet I cannot tell. This however, I shall attempt as speedily as circumstances will admit." "In a few days," he proceeds, "it will be needful that

I should write again, that it may be known how far I shall be able to attend on the accustomed services of the chapel, which, at present, were I there, I should not be able to perform. All this is from the hand of God. One at my time of life can have no reason to complain, having been possessed of so much health and strength, for so many years. I have been favoured beyond most; God forbid that these light afflictions should excite the most distant murmuring, from one that has cause for the most abundant thankfulness before God." The only difficulty with Mr. Rowland Hill in sickness, was to prevent his preaching; nothing but positive physical inability, would induce him to yield to the orders of his medical attendants, and the entreaties of his friends. To the letter, from which the last quotation is taken, Mrs. Hill added a postscript, in which she says, "The exertion of preaching is injurious to Mr. Hill, but I find it difficult to keep him from it." His removal to London was effected as soon as possible, where he was attended by Dr. Babington and Mr. Cline, with such skill and kindness that his complaint began quickly to give way. Dr. Babington called so often and was so attentive, that he expressed to him his fears, lest such frequent visits should interfere with his own interests. Dr. Babington replied, "Mr. Hill I shall be happy indeed to be made in any way the instrument of your recovery, for I shall not only have the pleasure of seeing you in the enjoyment of health, but shall have conferred a benefit upon numbers, to whom your ministry is made useful." By the blessing of God on the advice of this eminent physician, and the skill of the well known surgeon who was called to his aid, he was restored to many years of labour and usefulness.

During his illness, those who knew the restlessness of his temperament and impatience of confinement to the house, were surprised at seeing how he bore it. I remember the first evening on which he felt decidedly better. He was lying on a sofa in his drawing room, and we were just going down stairs, having taken leave of him, when he said—"Stop, I will have the servants up here, ring the bell." When they came in, he said—"We will go to prayer," and, remaining on the sofa, he breathed forth a short prayer, full of expressions of gratitude to God, and earnest dedication of returning strength to his glory. An answer to the affectionate inquiries of his friend, Mr. Wathen, will prove the truly christian state of mind in which he welcomed returning health.

*December 5th, 1814.*

MY VERY DEAR KIND FRIEND,

You will be more assuredly convinced that I am better, if I answer the letter you have so kindly written to my wife.

Yes, the Lord in infinite wisdom and goodness has chastened and afflicted me, but has not given me over to death. Only on this day se'nnight I was in such a state, that if the Lord had not put a speedy termination to my disease, it must have speedily terminated my life; but, by the blessing of God on some of the best medical help that London affords, I am still preserved, and O that it may be for his future glory, as far as he condescends to engage me as an instrument in his hands, for the future good of his church and people! Having already terminated the seventieth year of my life, it becomes me to look upon my present recovery as a short respite, rather than a long re-

prieve. Still the Lord may design that we should do something for him, and more than we may expect, even in the latter stages of our lives, and we shall not wish to die, if still we have any thing to do for him in this lower world of woe.

\* \* \* \* \*

You say nothing about Mrs. Wathen's health. We would, therefore, conclude she is better. What a mercy it is to enjoy health, if we are but enabled to enjoy it to the glory of God.

You kindly ask what you can do for me. I answer, pray for me, that my sickness may be sanctified. This blessing I have had from thousands. I am astonished that such an unworthy creature, should have been so laid upon the hearts of so many of the people of God.

I still continue convalescent, and am gaining strength, and really long, in my feeble way, again to be set at work.

Your ever most affectionate  
and obliged friend, &c.

ROWLAND HILL.

O. P. Wathen, Esq.

No one was more anxious for Mr. Rowland Hill's recovery, and to shew him every attention, than his friend, Mr. Wathen. As soon, too, as his appetite returned, he sent him venison, woodcocks, and such other delicacies as he knew would be acceptable, for which he received the following letter of thanks :—

*London, December 16th, 1814.*

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

Your very frequent and kind enquiries after my health, are most affectionately acknowledged by us

both. Through the mercy of God, since my last attack, which is now near three weeks ago, I have felt no returns of disease, and my strength is considerably recruited. O that, through the sparing and restoring mercies of our God, we may be dedicated to live more abundantly to his glory! We are thankful for the good news you send us respecting the health of Mrs. Wathen. We are never so thankful for health as when we have been deprived of it. We are told, that chastisement is sent for our *profit*, and for this purpose "that we may be made partakers of his holiness." The greatest blessing that God can confer, is his own divine image on the heart. This is heaven within us, and what would heaven be without his image when there!

A thousand thanks for your kind *prog.* In a few days we shall partake of our venison feast, and shall remember with gratitude the affectionate hand that sent it. The woodcocks were devoured to-day; they were both very good. Neither Moorfields, Snows-fields, Lincoln's-inn-fields, Leicester-fields, Saint George's-fields, Saint Giles-in-the-fields, nor any other fields about London, could have produced us such a treat.

\* \* \* \* \*

My kind love to Mr. ——. I know his services will be acceptable at Wotton, and I hope Mr. —'s will prove the same at Rodborough. Remember us to all your family, and believe me

Yours most affectionately,

R. HILL.

O. P. Wathen, Esq.

I recollect going with Mr. Hill the first time he walked out after he regained his strength. With much per-

suasion he put on his great coat. In the streets he received innumerable congratulations from persons he met; from tradesmen, who ran out of their shops, and from the inmates of every house he called at. The day was fine for the season. When he returned, his man enquired—"Sir, where is your great coat?"—"That's more than I can tell you," he replied laughing, "but I'll tell you where I have been, and you must go a hunting after it by and by." The ludicrous occurrences which resulted from his forgetfulness of such matters, often afforded us considerable merriment, in which no one partook more heartily than himself. If he had not been accompanied by a careful servant, parts of his dress would have been frequently separated in his journies, by very wide intervals. If ever any man had attained to the *digito monstrarier* it was Mr. Rowland Hill. Wherever he walked in London, persons were whispering, "There's Rowland Hill," and when, as was his custom, he stood to look at the prints in the shop windows, he attracted great attention. Of this, however, he never could be persuaded, and was just as much at ease in the crowded streets, as in his own grounds at Wotton. If a companion said to him—"You had better come on, sir, there are so many people staring at you," he would say—"O no, there's nobody thinks it worth while to look at me, I am sure." This was not affectation; he ever truly esteemed others better than himself, in the spirit of genuine humility.

During the visit of the sovereigns to this country, a pious general, in the staff of the Emperor Alexander, was a constant attendant at Surry chapel. From him Mr. Rowland Hill gleaned many interesting particulars of the autocrat, and had no doubt of his real piety

and love for the Bible Society. This distinguished officer very frequently dined at Mr. Hill's, and the conversation sometimes turned upon the Greek church, the errors of which were ably pointed out by Mr. Hill. One day a remark was made on the admirable petition—"By all thy sufferings, known and unknown, good Lord deliver us." "Aye," said Mr. Hill, "I consider that prayer to be one of the most touching ever uttered. The *unknown* sufferings of Christ! All his described sufferings were slight, in comparison with what infinite holiness must have felt in the midst of sinners; the light, the glory of heaven, in the darkness and impurity of the world, yet spotless, and without sin! O my Saviour, no tongue can describe, no angel can fathom the abyss of thy suffering for me a sinner. As I cannot reach the infinite height of thy love and thy glory in heaven, so I cannot descend into the depths of thy sorrows when here on earth. I can only wonder and adore!" Often did he burst forth with strains such as these, and so intense were his feelings, that every nerve seemed shaken with the workings of his mind. Never did any christian feel more completely, the power and beauty of the mysteries of redeeming love.



## CHAPTER XI.

### *Festivities at the conclusion of the war.*

THOUGH no person offered sincerer thanksgivings for the restoration of peace than Mr. Rowland Hill, he constantly expressed his disapprobation, of the manner in which the victories of our arms were celebrated in this country. In allusion to the roasting of oxen and sheep, and other festivities at Wotton, he says, in a letter to a friend, "Had twice as much been distributed, in a wholesome and orderly manner, I should have been glad to have been in the thickest of it ;" but as he considered such modes of manifesting a nation's joy, neither appropriate to the occasion, nor really beneficial to the poor, he declined participating in them. I was with him when he received the news of the battle of Waterloo ; on finding that his five gallant nephews had survived a contest, in which so many brave heroes fell, he lifted up his hand without uttering a single word. The expression of his countenance is still pictured in my memory : it manifested a stronger sense of gratitude to God, than could have been conveyed by words. He rose from his chair, went to the window, looked towards the lovely view before him, as if to conceal the emotions by which

he was unmanned, and left the room without speaking. Though Mr. Hill was now in his seventy-first year, he had engagements more numerous and fatiguing, than most young men could have gone through. He never preached less than four times a week to his people in London, and five at Wotton, besides meeting the society on a Monday evening; in addition to which, there was scarcely a religious or benevolent institution, according with the views he had adopted as his rule of action, which did not claim and receive a large share of his exertions. In one week, when past the age just mentioned, he went through the exertion of travelling a hundred miles in a mountainous part of Wales, and preached *twenty-one* sermons! Sometimes he complained that he was tired on a Sunday evening; but the vivacity of his conversation and the liveliness of his manner used occasionally to elicit the remark, "Well, sir, yours is a curious sort of fatigue," to which he would reply, "I was tired just now, but I forgot it." In a letter written at this time, he observes how wonderfully he had been favoured with health. "Thanks be to God," he says, "with a very few exceptions, I have had an abundant share of this blessing, for upwards of seventy years. No wonder if I now begin to complain that my limbs get stiff, and that I cannot accomplish similar active exertions to those of former days. Still may the will be the same, when the power is denied. The glory of our lives should be to live to the glory of God; and what are all our doings, compared to what our most merciful Redeemer has done for us? O for a spirit of full dedication to the glory of God!" In another letter he remarks, "Old as I am, I am just returned from a long missionary ramble; but I feel I am getting old. O that I may

work well to the last!" In all his journies, even when he had reached a period beyond that usually allotted to man, he was disconcerted if he did not find a pulpit ready for him every evening. In one of his letters, fixing his days for preaching, on his road to some place, he says, "Ever since my master has put me into office, I have ever esteemed it my duty to remember his admonition—'As ye go preach.'" His general answer, to invitations to houses on his route, was, "I shall be happy to come to you, if you can find me a place to preach in."

To preach, and to promote the preaching of Christ, was ever a prominent object of Mr. Rowland Hill's life, and he made his own ease and convenience entirely subservient to it. This induced him to assist itinerants whose qualifications he approved; but he never countenanced the slightest interference with the sphere of a clergyman, whose doctrines and zeal were admired by him. In writing his opinion of the sort of persons required for such a work, he says—"Lively, zealous, wise, simple-hearted, liberal-minded, &c. &c. preachers, are all we want. These cannot be manufactured at academies. O what huge offence I gave the other day, by warning young preachers not to travel about the country, *with a sack of dried tongues for sale*, wherever they went. It is a poor traffic, and ill-calculated to bring souls to Christ." Again, he remarked on another occasion—"Holy and faithful ministers, blessed with equal ability and zeal, are greatly needed. We should deal much with the Lord of the harvest, to raise them up and send them forth. How different the poor tools of ministers of our manufacturing, when compared with the burning and shining lights the Lord can send forth."

Though at this stage of his life, Mr. Rowland Hill was free from most of those temporal cares and anxieties, which are the painful lot of many of God's people, he had to mourn the unexpected decease of some highly valued friends of his flock. Two of these were Mr. Beames, and Mr. Benjamin Neale, the eldest son of the proprietor of the well known glass and china repository, in St. Paul's church yard, men devoted to the cause of truth and benevolence. Mr. Hill's affection for the former of these excellent christians, is thus strongly expressed in a letter to Mr. B. Neale. "I ought to love him; he is my wise, and good and faithful friend. Vital christianity creates many such, and there is no real friendship out of Christ. It cannot be, for there is no love out of Christ, for he alone is the centre and source of love."

From the family of the Neales, Mr. Hill had received for many years the strongest proofs of attachment, and maintained such an intercourse with them, as should subsist between a pastor and the affectionate members of his congregation. Mr. Neale was a man of the strictest integrity, and appropriated to the cause of charity and religion, a large share of the income he had the good fortune to acquire by diligence in business. One of his sons, Mr. Cornelius Neale, obtained the first mathematical and second classical honors of his year at Cambridge: he was senior wrangler and second chancellor's medallist. His literary attainments were not more remarkable than the kindness of his disposition, of which I had three years' happy experience, being placed under his able tuition, through the recommendation of Mr. Rowland Hill. Mr. Cornelius Neale married the accomplished daughter of Dr. John Mason Good, the well-known author

of many valuable works. The sincerity of Mr. Hill's regard for Mr. Benjamin Neale will appear from the following letter, addressed to Mrs. Neale, in allusion to the alarming state of her husband's health :

*Wotton, August 22, 1815.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

While I feel myself gratified for your kind attention, in sending me the information respecting the dangerous state of Mr. Neale's health from a recent attack, yet no news could have affected me more, as I have no friend upon earth that I have reason more sincerely to value and esteem. These are most painful events, and under them it requires a great sacrifice of our own wills to say—"Thy will be done." I do not blame myself for this struggle. It is no sign that we value the blessing of God, in the enjoyment of those who appeared to be raised up for useful and valuable purposes, if we can part with them without regret. That mind is badly framed that prefers stoical indifference to christian sensibility ; and though the pain is abundantly more acute, where those finer feelings of the mind are found to exist, yet who that deserves the name of a human being would wish to be without them? The man without natural affection is but a monster in human shape. To weep with those that weep, is as much our duty, as to rejoice with those that rejoice, while there is a secret consolation that it flows from the mind of Christ within us ; for when the family of his friend Lazarus partook of the cup of human woe, Jesus wept.

We are not to live in this world of woe, without being called to the exercise of the same sort of feelings by similar events. Mrs. Hill's spirits and strength

have been exceedingly enervated by attending on her dying brother at Wells.

\* \* \* \* \*

Your best beloved has been enabled to live to God, and such die to be eternally with him.

As soon as I have finished this letter I must write on another similar subject. This morning's post has brought me the tidings of the dangerous illness of a younger brother—not my brother Brian, who, I believe, is known to you, and I trust is known to God, but of another brother.

\* \* \* \* \*

You know I shall be naturally anxious to hear from you, or some of the family, on a speedy day. I just tell you how I am to be situated, that you may know how to direct. I shall continue in this place till Wednesday in the next week, the 30th instant, when I go to Portsmouth for Mr. Griffin,<sup>1</sup> where I shall continue about a fortnight before my return.

May the supporting hand be upon you. With most affectionate love to all,

Yours very sincerely,

R. HILL.

Mrs. B. Neale.

On the death of Mr. B. Neale, Mr. Hill thus beautifully addressed the language of condolence to his widow.

*Wotton, August 14, 1816.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

Not knowing how far your mind might have been overpowered by the heavy bereavement you

<sup>1</sup> One of Mr. Hill's constant supplies at Surry chapel, and the author of an excellent Funeral Sermon on his death.

have been called to sustain, I was just preparing to make some enquiries from Mr. C. Neale, an immediate attention to which, I feared might too much revive the sorrows of your mind. I am exceedingly thankful, however, by the contents of your letter, to find that you have been supported with so much calmness and sedateness of spirit, under a loss so irreparable and severe. Still, not irreparable, if he who decreed it is more abundantly the portion of our hearts; nor yet severe, if we can believe that the darkest providence has a brighter side than the eye of sense can discern: and I am the more thankful for you, dear madam, since I am satisfied, that holy serenity of mind is no proof of apathy and unfeeling indifference, but rather of a dignified and submissive calmness, before him who doeth all things well. I therefore greatly thank God on your behalf.

Though none of those endearing ties, that nature forms, subsisted between me and our late invaluable friend, yet I know not one upon the earth I more affectionately esteemed, and the loss of whose advice and friendship I more sincerely regret. But these painful deprivations are all from the hand of God. We deserve them as judgments, and by raising up others again, he can restore them in mercy; and if our outward adversity tends to inward prosperity, even from our sharpest trials we shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Fruitless sorrow can produce nothing better than rebellious murmurings before God; while patient submission sweetens every bitter, and enables us to say that all is well. No doubt, but that the reflection of the loss you have sustained, will be frequently returning to your mind; but still it is not an unpleas-



ing melancholy, while we can recollect those pleasing qualities, those heavenly graces which cannot die with those that die, and which they once possessed, while they were on this lower, this pilgrim state with us.

As you say nothing particularly respecting your mother's mind, I trust she is blessed with the same calmness, and holy resignation of spirit to the will of God, which you have been permitted to enjoy. It is an honour to parents, to have children that were their joy and glory while in life, and an inexpressible consolation, to believe that they are in glory after life.

\* \* \* \* \*

With the sincerest regard to the remains of a family for whom I have the highest love and esteem, believe me to be,

Dear madam,

Yours very affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

Mrs. B. Neale.

I was much with Mr. Rowland Hill in the year 1816, during the period of his resistance to the attempt made to assess Surry chapel to the parish rates. By his exertions these efforts proved unsuccessful; but I never recollect him more agitated and anxious, under any circumstances. I accompanied him to the court on the day of the sixth appeal, and witnessed the numerous congratulations which he received, when the decision proved to be in his favour. With most of the principal inhabitants of the parish of Christchurch, Mr. Hill lived upon very friendly terms, and pleasing interchanges of civility took place between himself and his neighbours. The pamphlets of Mr. Rowland Hill, on the subject of rating his chapel,

are known to the public, as well as his principles of action: it will not, therefore, be necessary for me to advert to them at any length. Every investigation of the finances of Surry chapel, and the emoluments of its minister, only reflected credit on his disinterestedness, and the benevolence of a worthy people. Hurt as he was by the repeated trials of his opponents to attain their object, he was, if possible, even more grieved at the insinuation, that he was hostile to the established church. "No one circumstance," he declared, "would give him so much satisfaction, as to see the church of England what she should be—the living temple of the living God—the palladium of British piety, and the glory of the land."

The dissenters are much indebted to Mr. Rowland Hill, for his exertions on behalf of their religious liberties, as well as for the good advice he gave them upon all occasions. I recollect his coming home one day from a meeting, where some observations had been made on the privileges of churchmen, which he disapproved. "I took the liberty," he said, "to make a few remarks; and among other things I told them, you know from time immemorial, there has been *a certain state saddle*, and those who have a firm seat in it, will naturally kick off those who try to get up behind; and if you could get into it, you would do just the same." His sentiments, with respect to the clergy were—"It is the chartered privilege of the church to lead, and let her ministers outlive and outshine the dissenters, who are so much dreaded by some as rivals, by a conduct which is consistent with their sacred office, and we shall soon see what will be the result. No churches are empty, where the doctrines of the reformation are duly urged, with purity and energy, upon the people's minds."

Mr. Rowland Hill used to seize every opportunity, of shewing his respect for the active ministers of the church, and was very particular in attending the anniversary sermon, preached by a clergyman, for the London Missionary Society. If invited elsewhere on that day, he replied, "No, no, I always go to church, and always intend it;" and on one of these occasions, a most interesting circumstance occurred. The preacher was Dr. Gilbee, formerly rector of Barby, Northamptonshire, whose discourse from John x, 16, was full of piety and christian love. Mr. Hill was so delighted, that he said, "when I found he was drawing to a conclusion, I could hardly help crying out 'go on Dr. Gilbee, pray give us a little more.'" At the close of the service he went to the vestry, and opening the door gently, asked permission to introduce himself.

"Dear Dr. Gilbee, will you permit a poor unworthy servant of our Divine Master, to thank you for this day's sermon?"

"O dearest Mr. Hill," exclaimed Dr. Gilbee, "come in, come in—how glad I am to see you. It was under your ministry, that I was first led to God!"

This declaration was followed by such emotions as are experienced by those alone who know what it is to reciprocate the affection engendered in their hearts by the communication of the spirit and image of a crucified Redeemer.

Mr. Hill was much esteemed by his late Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, who took every opportunity of shewing him both public and private marks of his regard. I remember his coming twice to Surry chapel; and in the course of conversation afterwards, in the drawing room, his Royal Highness mentioned how much he was struck by the service, particularly the singing.

Mr. Jacob, the organist of Surry chapel, was a performer of first-rate talent, and had refused many advantageous offers of employment, merely from conscientious principles. Mr. Rowland Hill indulged him with an annual sacred performance, for the benefit of his alms-houses, to which persons were admitted by five shilling tickets. Choruses, unusually grand and inspiring, were succeeded by the most striking displays of the power of the organ, played by such masters of the art as Wesley, Crotch, and Jacob. The thunder-storm of the latter musician, produced an almost awful effect; to which a performance, on the swell of the organ, accompanied by Salomon, the celebrated violinist, formed a soft and charming contrast. Many persons were pleased with these oratorios; others objected to them. Mr. Hill, however, as he positively refused to allow any voluntary on the Sunday, in his chapel, thought it only fair to give the excellent musician who conducted the singing, an opportunity of shewing his powers, considering that the character of the music, and the charitable object in view, rendered the permission perfectly allowable.

Mr. Hill first heard Jacob at the commemoration of Handel, in Westminster Abbey, where he sung as a boy. He was appointed organist to Surry chapel at a very early age, and continued in that situation for many years. His ear was so fine, that he was selected by the great Haydn to tune his pianoforte. Unhappy differences between Mr. Hill and himself separated them after a long connexion; but in his last illness he sent for his venerable pastor, and died expressing towards him, the same affection and veneration he had felt in former years.

Repeated attempts to assess Surry chapel, were not

the only events by which Mr. Rowland Hill was harassed at this period of his life. Certain occurrences at Wotton, which ended in the departure of his resident assistant from that place, occupied a large share of his attention. He became exceedingly anxious to find a suitable successor for this situation, and diligently inquired for a young man of ability and piety, to be his coadjutor while living, and succeed him when he died. Such a one he found, to his great delight, in a young Welshman, named Theophilus Jones, who was originally apprenticed to the trade of a cabinet-maker; but gave such signs of zeal, piety, and preaching talents, that he had long attracted the notice of those who recommended him to Mr. Hill. I was present at his first coming to Wotton, and recollect the surprise excited by the easy address and sensible conversation of a person only just emerged from obscurity. Mr. Hill and his hearers were equally pleased with their new minister, who, had his taste been corrected, and his understanding trained by early education, would probably have ranked amongst the first preachers and theologians of his day. The congregation, diminished by reason of the differences of many with their former pastor, was not only restored to its previous numbers, but augmented by the accession of a large body of fresh members, attracted by the popularity of Mr. Jones. After a short probation he was ordained, according to the mode adopted by dissenters, as the regular minister of Mr. Hill's Wotton chapel, where he continued to labour till the death of his patron, whose funeral he survived little more than a week. The increased attendance at the Tabernacle, and the numerous conversions which followed the ministrations of this laborious

young man, gave Mr. Hill the sincerest pleasure. His anxiety for such a result, he thus expresses in a letter to Mr. Jones, soon after he commenced his residence at Wotton. "How thankful shall I be to hear that the Lord prospers you in the work, makes you a complete healer of the breaches, and has given you the honour more than to fill up the vacant places that division, and sin, and death, has made among us. I find very few ministers of a truly devoted and spiritual cast. Such as are *made up* by the artifice of man, are never fit to do the work that God has to accomplish in his living church, his spiritual house, in which he himself condescends to dwell; and believe me, my dear youth, as long as God continues to bless you, I trust nothing will be wanting in me, to add to your happiness and comfort in life. The next time you meet in society, present the people with my love; and if there have been jarring strings among us, for the time to come, may they be so well tuned by the skilful hand of our God, that they may never jar again. O for peace and prosperity within the lamp of God. Nothing can be done for Him, without Him. O for more simple dependence on His almighty strength." He gives him also the following hints as to preaching:—"Rash preaching always disgusts; timid preaching does nothing but leave poor souls fast asleep; while bold preaching, if delivered under an affectionate love to the souls of men, and with a humble desire to promote the glory of God, is the only preaching that is owned and blessed of God."

When he received the first reports of his labours and success, he wrote to him—"My dear youth, while God blesses you, I trust it will be my happiness

to make you happy, and to uphold you to the utmost of my feeble powers. I trust Wotton will be a place of profitable and active retirement, preparatory to a sphere of more extended usefulness, on a future day. If you were to continue the same plain bawling Welshman you are now, in your present situation, I might observe, go on; never mind breaking grammar, if the Lord enables you to break hearts, and bring souls to Christ; but if you could acquire a little more culture, without losing any of your zeal and holy simplicity of heart, your usefulness might be more extended. I would not give you a single sixpence, to have your tongue dressed at any of our modern academies; they are, in general, sad soul-starvation places. Only take the hint, and work on, and blunder on, as hard and as fast as you can."

The advice thus offered, was not lost upon Mr. Jones. He laboured hard, to overcome the defects arising from his want of education, and in a measure succeeded. At length Mr. Hill, seeing his praiseworthy improvement, determined to make him one of his London supplies, and invited him in these terms: "I am very sorry I have not time to say more, than that I love you much, because the Lord blesses you, and that makes me bless God for you. It does my heart good to hear of you in my old age. Mr. — is to give you five pounds towards your journey to London; and the first thing you shall do, shall be to preach Welsh in our chapel, and that will clear your throat for a little English afterwards." By excessive application, Mr. Jones had stored his naturally gifted mind, with no ordinary share of doctrinal theology, and had collected an admirable library of old divines, in which he was very generously assisted by his pa-



tron and friends. Hence, while his manner was energetic in the extreme, his voice at times overpowering, and his delivery without the slightest culture, such was the excellence of his matter, and so searching were his sermons, that all defects were overlooked, in the midst of a flow of admirable and awakening truths. Mr. Hill wrote to him on this subject, in his own kind and original style. "As for *matter*," he says, "I shall not be ashamed to own you as a brother minister, all the world over; but as to *manner*, you greatly put me in mind of myself in my younger days. When I was once set a going, I was almost afraid to stop and pause, even for a little breath, lest I should be stuck fast. Now, I prophecy concerning you, that your ministry will be more powerful, if, *at times*, you are less vehement. I say *at times*; for there are those sort of solemn sentiments, that require the utmost energy that can be adopted: but the same sort of monotony of loud speaking throughout, spoils this good effect; even your bodily health will feel the advantage of [less exertion], and the people will be benefited thereby. Still, my dear youth, let not any painful cold attention to manner and voice, chill the warmth of your heart, and the fervency of your zeal to bring souls to God. Let it be your main study to feel well, that you may make the people feel well, and then good will be the result. Go on and prosper, and be assured that you have a very warm place, in my affections and esteem; and that it is with uncommon satisfaction and joy, I bless God, that you have been sent amongst us." On another occasion, Mr. Hill expressed himself in terms well worthy the attention of every minister. After inquiring how his young assistant prospered, what fresh trophies were won over

the powers of darkness, and how the children of God prospered among themselves, he proceeds :—" In the church of Christ, life begets life, all the world over, and death generates death. O that I was more cautious respecting myself as a minister, as so much depends on us how it is with the people also. We work badly upon the hearts of others, but as God in infinite mercy works well in us : we preach best when we feel best ; and the nearer we live to God, the better we feel. A religion, without feeling, is no religion. How can we have repentance, without feeling holy sorrow for sin, and indignation against it ? How can we have faith in the Lord Jesus, and behold that infinite fulness of grace treasured up in him for us, without rejoicing in him, while we believe with joy unspeakable and full of glory ? Converts made by mere human persuasion, only corrupt the church, having nothing but a name to live, while they are dead. Death must be the result of any connexion with them ; while nothing revives the church so delightfully, as when it is frequently the birth-place of new-born souls. Such are the only evidences and seals, to the ministers themselves, that they are sent of God."

The course Mr. Rowland Hill prescribed to Mr. Jones, was much like that pursued by himself. He was not willing that he should lose a single day, and offered him poor old " Bob," his favorite saddle-horse, to carry him on preaching expeditions, to all the villages around Wotton. In one of his letters he says, " I hope old Bobby and you are perfectly agreed about village preaching ;"—and in another, " The best covetousness a minister can possess, is to be covetous after the souls of men. We should judge our work is never

done, while one single unconverted soul is within our reach. Alas, then ! how little we have done in comparison of what we have to do ! O for more of that holy zeal which makes us travail in birth again, till Christ shall be formed within the souls of thousands that are dead in trespasses and sins ! ”

No man ever had more solemn views than Mr. Rowland Hill, of the true nature of the ministerial work, and of the necessity of a humble dependence on the Lord's assistance, for a blessing in it. One of his remarks was—“ If favored at any time with what is called a good opportunity, I am too apt to catch myself saying—“ Well done I, when I should lie in the dust, and give God all the glory.” Another was—“ Lord make me distrustful of myself, that I may confide in thee alone—self-dependence is the pharisee's high road to destruction.” “ Oh dear,” he said “ what poor stuff makes a preacher in the present day !—a useful minister must have brains in his head, prudence in his conduct, and grace in his heart ; which is more than too many of the *made-up talkers*, who set up in these times for preachers, have.”

He was accustomed strongly to urge, on all who entered the sacred office, the necessity of maintaining christian and heavenly tempers among their people ; “ Some folks,” he would say, “ appear as if they had been bathed in *crab verjuice* in their infancy, which penetrated through their skins, and has made them sour-blooded ever since—but this will not do for a messenger of the gospel ; as he bears a message, so he must manifest a spirit of love.” A minister having observed to him, that notwithstanding the fault found with his dry sermons, there were hopes of their usefulness, for Sampson had slain the Philistines with the

jaw-bone of an ass—"True, he did," replied Mr. Hill, "but it was a *moist* jaw-bone." He used to like Dr. Ryland's advice to his young academicians—"Mind, no sermon is of any value, or likely to be useful, which has not the three R's in it—Ruin by the Fall—Redemption by Christ—Regeneration by the Holy Spirit." Of himself he remarked, "My aim, in every sermon, is a stout and lusty call to sinners, to quicken the saints, and to be made a universal blessing to all." It was a favorite saying with him—"The nearer we live to God, the better we are enabled to serve him. O how I hate my own noise, when I have nothing to make a noise about. Heavenly wisdom creates heavenly utterance." In a letter to Mr. Jones he observes—"There is something in preaching the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, I long to get at. At times, I think I feel somewhat like it, and then I bawl almost as bad as the Welshman. If we deal with divine realities, we ought to feel them such, and then the people will in general feel with us, and acknowledge the power that does wonders on the heart; while dry, formal, discussional preaching, leaves the hearers just where it found them. Still, they who are thus favored, had need to be favored with a deal of humility. We are too apt to be proud of that which is not our own. . . . . O humility, humility, humility!"

It is no wonder, with such impressions as to the nature of his work, and the state of his mind, that Mr. Rowland Hill's preaching was so honored and blessed of God. "Lord help," was his constant, earnest prayer, and it was heard.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *Village Itinerancy.*

THE too long neglected condition of a large portion of our rural population, and the desecration of the sabbath by every species of unholy pastime, were evils earnestly deplored, and assiduously endeavoured to be corrected by Mr. Rowland Hill, wherever his influence extended. With this view, he was for many years devoted to the promotion of village preaching; not for the purpose of interference, to assist the growth of a sect, within the legitimate sphere of an exemplary clergyman, but to gather those, who wandered as sheep having no shepherd, into the fold of Christ. For the furtherance of this object, Mr. Hill became a very active member of a society called the Village Itinerancy, on whose committees, I find from the memoranda of his engagements, he was a frequent attendant. It was in the year 1796, that proposals were made for the establishment of this institution, to which a theological seminary was added in the year 1803. The tuition of the students has long been superintended by the Rev. George Collision, a truly pious and excellent man, much esteemed by Mr. Hill, and whose

primary object is to make every other species of knowledge subsidiary to that of the scriptures.

No minister can be permitted to occupy any of the stations selected by this society, whose sentiments "are not conformable to the doctrinal articles of the church of England;" and I believe there has never occurred an instance of its itinerants having trespassed on a field diligently and wisely cultivated by the labours of others. Had its designs extended beyond "the neglected districts of our land," it would not have received the countenance and support of Mr. Rowland Hill, whom I have often heard make some of his severest remarks, on the conduct of such as use every artifice to decoy, to their places of worship, the converts of faithful and successful ministers. From the active share taken by Mr. Rowland Hill, in the business of the Village Itinerancy, it is evident, that its members professed a spirit kindred with his own, in their attempts to ameliorate the destitute condition of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, who are living in all the ignorance and depravity of heathens, for want of more pressing calls to the only source of wisdom, piety, and happiness. To use the words of Mr. Hill, his great design was, "to enrich the church by fresh trophies of grace," and, I may add, to bring forth captives from the dark strong-holds of Satan, into the glorious light and liberty of the gospel.

Mr. Rowland Hill was constantly urging the duty of selecting preachers, to go forth among those who were destitute of the means of grace, and of providing accommodation for worship, in places not possessing this advantage. It was part of his principle, that all young converts should be set to work for God, in a manner suitable to their natural gifts or relative situa-

tions. Some he recommended as teachers in Sunday schools, others as expositors of the plain truths of scriptures to the simple and ignorant, and those who enjoyed a ripeness of religious experience were advised to become visiters of the sick. There is employment in the vineyard, he always considered, for every description of labourer, but he strongly urged the necessity of duly weighing the nature of the department most suitable to individual circumstances. A young and respectable tradesman, remarkable for diligence in the Surry chapel Sunday schools, consulted Mr. Hill on the propriety of becoming a minister, and received the following answer to his inquiries:—

*Wotton, October.*

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

As the office of a minister seems to be beyond all others the most useful, so I am not surprised that such as feel themselves devoted to God, are desirous to fill that office: and, though the grand work in those that may be called to fill that important trust, must be found in a real work of grace upon their own hearts, yet there are other qualifications absolutely needed, before they can prove themselves “workmen that need not be ashamed.” There must be a measure of natural gifts, as well as spiritual graces; and though we may know how far we may possess the one, by a close examination of our hearts before God, the other, I should suppose, can only be discovered to us by a due and proper use of means.

There is what the scripture calls an *aptitude to teach*—a quickness and readiness of thought, well regulated by the letter of the word, and by that wisdom which is from above; and, for the want of this, many



have entered into the ministry to prove a burden to themselves, and a dead weight to the churches they may be called to serve. Now this holy aptitude, in my opinion, can only be discovered by the practical exercise of such gifts, of which others are always better judges than we can be ourselves ; and such will be naturally called forth for the further exercise of them, by such as have felt the spiritual good of them to their hearts : and then, if Providence sets before you such open doors as these, you may better judge how far you are called to the sacred office. As for all human erudition, however good in its place, yet, in itself, it is nothing, it is much worse than nothing. How many of our half-dead churches, are contented to be filled with mere pulpit lumber of this sort, while the prosperity even of living churches is greatly impeded thereby ? In addition to this, what heart burnings and animosities are the result, which too frequently terminate in painful divisions and separations, to the disgrace of the sacred cause.

In these free remarks, while I cannot entertain the most distant doubt, respecting your integrity and uprightness before God, yet I have lived too long in the world, not to know the need of such hints as these, and I am sure you will take them as they are really meant.

Let me also drop a further hint, as respects your present situation in life. All tradesmen who by their own honesty and integrity, can preserve for themselves an honorable independence, fill a creditable situation in life, and are not debarred from being occasionally useful in the church of Christ. You, at present, are most usefully engaged in our Sunday schools, and the gratuitous services of yourself and others, are highly

creditable and beneficial to the cause. While thus engaged, you may, by degrees, feel your way, how far the Lord may design you for more extended usefulness in the work, and this alone a future day can decide.

And now for my last hint, till I shall [D. V.] again see you in town. A person who enters the ministry, and is obliged to be *entirely* dependent upon the people for his support, unless he be of remarkable abilities, is frequently called to suffer severely from those who furnish him with his support; and if you should throw up a profitable concern, you may suffer for it in a future day. While I would at all times wish to live dependent on God, yet it is a great privilege to live a little independently of the world.

I shall be both thankful for your affliction, and thankful for your recovery, if it has proved a profitable season for your soul. Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions: what a mercy to be better for the rod!

With cordial love to your family and all friends, believe me to be,

Very sincerely yours,

ROWLAND HILL.

From this letter may be gathered the sentiments of Mr. Rowland Hill, with reference to the gifts required in the sacred office of preaching, and it would be well, if a more general regard were paid to the aptitude for teaching, by all persons engaging in these solemn duties. The rule Mr. Hill prescribed to himself, and exhorted others to follow, was—"While a soul within our reach is ignorant of a Saviour, we must endeavour to win him to Christ,"—in which, however differing as to the best means of effecting this object, all true christians cannot fail heartily to concur. These are,

nevertheless, to be carefully considered, before we embark in so serious an undertaking, lest our zeal, untempered with wisdom and prudence, should carry us into the battle, like the mettle of a sightless war-horse, only to receive wounds, and retreat incapacitated for further exertions. Particular cases of apparent interest, must sometimes be passed over, for the sake of securing a larger aggregate of usefulness, and with this view all our calculations should be made. Still, on the contrary, will it be proper to inquire, how far these are consistent with the positive command "to preach the gospel to every creature;" and it appears to me, to be a matter worthy of the earnest attention of the members of our church, how we may most effectually promote an ingathering of the forsaken outcasts of our community. Some plan could surely be devised, so that emissaries, acting in perfect conformity with established rules, might be commissioned to invite the thousands; in the precincts of our large towns, whose numbers and situation place them beyond the reach of the efficient exertions of an appointed minister. Our district visiters, and, I may say, the agents of our Prayer Book and Homily Society, have effected much good in this way; but they have scarcely crossed the margin of a widely extended field, hitherto left as desert as the barren wilderness, and almost as unexplored. While we have carried the seeds of truth, and have cultivated the regions of our very antipodes, is it not a strange inconsistency, to suffer any portion of the land in which we dwell, to remain unblest with husbandmen, fit and able, under the divine guidance, to convert the moral barrenness of the immense waste before, us into a scene of verdure, fruitfulness, and beauty?

In unison with Mr. Rowland Hill's expressed desire, to win every soul within his reach to Christ, his efforts were often directed to the seamen of Great Britain. He was one of the first promoters of a floating place of worship, in which the heroes of the deep might hear the gospel, on the bosom of their favorite element. He loved preaching to sailors, and was once much encouraged by accidentally overhearing three or four of these brave fellows, supplicating at the throne of grace, in the most touching accents, for a blessing on his labours. The seamen returned his kindness with the deepest regard; and I remember once, an honest tar knocked us up at three o'clock in the morning, to say that he had taken "a passage to the West by a five o'clock coach," but that he could not leave, without just having a peep at his dear Rowland Hill, and craving his blessing.

One of Mr. Hill's favorite recreations, was watching the progress of the erection of Waterloo-bridge. Many a walk have I taken there with him. The workmen knew him, and would look up and smile when they saw him coming, for he had generally some good-natured remark ready to accost them with. He was once near meeting with a serious accident there, from walking carelessly on the edge of a plank, but was saved by the prompt interposition of a person engaged in the works. As was the case with him, in every thing to which he turned his thoughts, he gathered from these visits illustrations for his preaching. I recollect his saying, in one of his sermons on the present state of the church and of the world, "If we look only at the confusion which exists around us, we shall see but little sign of the fulfilments, of the great revealed purposes of God. But he does design

to raise, from the apparently incongruous materials which are scattered upon the earth, a temple to his own glory, of which his people are to be the *lively stones*. What appears to us to be irregularity and disorder, will all be made subservient to the plan of the great Architect. I went down yesterday to see the works at the new bridge; all appears confusion; but soon shall this confusion be cleared away, and a noble monument of art do honour to the contriver's genius. So it is with the aspect of the world; we must not regard so much present appearances, as future prospects; only let us be found working for God. Oh! how the workmen laboured at the huge masses of stone, to fit them for their places; so the Lord is at work, in polishing and framing for their places, the living stones of his glorious building, that we may be made like unto Him who is himself the chief corner stone, and be happy in his presence, in holiness for ever."

Another of Mr. Hill's favourite places of resort, was the museum of the London Missionary Society. I have often gone there with him, where we used to meet his old fellow-labourer in the same cause, Matthew Wilks, whose zeal was as fervent in missionary efforts as his own. Mr. Wilks would say, "these are the signs of the great work, and it does our old hearts good to see them. Well, how is your eye now, Mr. Hill, is it better?" On Mr. Hill's replying that it was free from pain and irritability, but very dim, he remarked, with his own peculiar look and voice—"well, if you cannot see you can *preach*. What a mercy—if you were quite blind, you could *preach*, eh!—what a comfort to have it in the head, and feel it in the heart—that must be your consolation, and it is the only one." Matthew Wilks was an eccentric

minister of the old school, but possessed a vigorous understanding, a benevolent heart, and a great depth of theological knowledge. When he died, his loss was keenly felt by Mr. Hill, who attended his funeral, and at the grave, passed a well-merited eulogium on the many excellencies of his character.

Mr. Hill's missionary zeal did not effervesce and evaporate in a speech upon a platform, or the excitement of a sermon: it was carried home to his fireside, formed the frequent topic of his conversation, and the theme of fervent supplication at the family altar. After a meeting, where he had seen some convert to the gospel from the miseries of barbarism and idolatry, I have known him so filled with holy joy, that he could converse on nothing else. Adverting to the appearance of the convert, he would remark, "Blessed be God for these first fruits—did you observe the gentle manners and the innocent smile of one, that was but a short time ago ferocious, and, perhaps, a cannibal! O what a work is divine grace in the human soul; imparting to a savage, all the decorum and delicacy of the most cultivated mind."

When Prince Rataaffe, from Madagascar, visited this country, and attended the anniversary of the London Missionary Society, Mr. Hill was completely overpowered by his feelings. The poor boys, too, sent here from the same island, were continually invited to his house, and treated by him with every species of kindness and attention. After they had been a short time in London, he invited Lord Gambier and Mr. Wilberforce to come and see them. Their manner towards the young strangers seemed in an instant to win their confidence, and it was a most truly interesting spectacle, to see these three benefactors of the

human race, rejoicing over those they hoped to rescue from the thralldom of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry. Mr. Hill often spoke of the pleasure he enjoyed on that day, and never without some affectionate expression of his esteem for the abolisher of the slave trade, and the friend of every effort to promote the best interests of mankind.

It is a melancholy fact, that the inconsistency of professing christians has often staggered the converted heather, who have been brought to our shores as specimens of the happy effects of missionary labours. One of the poor hottentots, who came over with Kitchener, said, in the presence of Mr. Hill, "Me tink all English real christians before me come; me 'fraid not now,"—a severe rebuke from such a quarter, that should teach us the great importance of exhibiting, in our own example, the force of the precepts we inculcate upon others.

Once, perceiving Mr. Rowland Hill to be unusually pensive, and hearing him sigh, I ventured to say to him, "Sir, I hope nothing is the matter with you." "No, Sidney," he replied, "I was only thinking how weary I am of a great deal of what is called the *religious world*!" In writing to a friend, who was much staggered by the conduct of some who had been supposed to be under the influence of religion, he remarks, "I am grieved, my dear sir, that you have seen so much among religious professors, that is so contrary to their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Real religion is still the same, let the professors of it be what they may." In the year 1818, when informed of the death of two individuals, whose lives had cast stumbling-blocks in the way of many, and had been very distressing to himself, Mr. Hill observes, in a let-



ter, "And so poor — and are both gone. O what a mercy, to be blest with a blameless and harmless conduct through life, that real religion may be a greater credit to us, than such poor worms can be to it, in the whole of our deportment through the world! Happy they who are kept by that power which keeps so gloriously. That we may live *to* God, may we live *on* God; then shall we live *with* God to all eternity."

In the letter from which the last quotation is taken, Mr. Rowland Hill communicates to his friend, the wonderful triumphs of the missionary cause in Otaheite. "Charming news from the South seas. The next number of the magazine will be worth your reading. How is the Lord making those to be his people, that were not his people. A large cargo of their gods is now on its voyage, as a present to the Missionary Society, and in others of the South Sea Islands, they seem preparing to treat their deities with the same contempt." The converted Pomarrè and his subjects, were often in the thoughts of Mr. Rowland Hill, and received from him some interesting tokens of his regard.

Aged as both Mr. and Mrs. Hill were, at the period to which I have just referred, they made the weight of years no excuse for repose or inactivity, but courted rather than avoided every useful exertion. When engagements, multiplying around Mr. Hill, occupied his time and attention, Mrs. Hill would answer or arrange for him his daily accumulating pile of letters, and thus, in a considerable degree, relieve the anxiety of his mind. Their only source of grief, seemed to be the loss by death of those who had so long and faithfully accompanied them, in their protracted pilgrimage. Frequently when Mr. Rowland Hill has been

seated in the pulpit, while the hymn was singing before the sermon, I have observed the slow and pensive turn of his head, from one part to another of the chapel, succeeded by an expression of sadness on his venerable countenance. His hearers, in general, knew not the cause of his embarrassed manner, but he would afterwards explain it to those who dined at his table. "I could not preach this morning; my eye glanced on the places so long occupied by my dear old friends, now filled by strangers.—Ah! I must soon be gone myself; Lord help me to serve him, while I live." On Sunday, December 13th, 1818, Mrs. Hill says, in a letter to an acquaintance, "Mr. Hill preached, both morning and evening, funeral sermons, for two members of Surry chapel; I trust each in glory." One of these was the mother of his friend, Mr. Benjamin Neale; and the following letter, was written to the widow of that gentleman, on the death of her aged relative:—

*Surry chapel, Monday noon.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I had frequently called in St. Paul's church-yard, to inquire after our dear friend, and the report was such as left me no hopes that she could long survive; and you must naturally suppose that I had heard of the event, before your [letter] was received. Alas! almost all my dear friends of that household, that were such steady and honourable friends to the cause of God and humanity among us, are now no more. Such has been his sovereign will, who doeth all things well. When the Lord visits by taking away, it certainly becomes us to grieve and to lament, but not to despond, while the residue of the spirit is with him that can restore the loss.

Though the task you impose upon me next Sunday morning is a painful one, yet it is a favourable circumstance, that I am in no great danger of saying more than I should, respecting the excellencies of our dear departed friend.

She was but a very few months older than myself. How soon must my departure be now at hand: and though my strength has been hitherto continued beyond expectation, yet O for grace and power that my few remaining days may be more than ever dedicated to his glory. With our love to the Daltons, believe me to be,

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

Mrs. B. Neale.

Just before the death of this pious and valued christian, Mr. Hill says of her, in a letter to Mr. Griffin, of Portsea, "Our dear old friend, Mrs. Neale, is nearly exhausted and gone. She is the last of one of the most kind and affectionate families that the indulgent providence of God sent among us for our credit and support. How many of my friends have I been permitted to outlive! How soon I am to follow them must be left to him who knows our appointed time."

In the year 1819, just before his usual time of quitting London for his residence in the country, Mr. Rowland Hill was walking in Surry chapel, and not perceiving that a trap-door was left open in the floor, he fell through it, and severely injured his leg. Considering his age, and the circumstances of his fall, it was a providential escape from far more serious consequences. He mentions to Mr. Jones, in the following terms, the derangement of all his plans by the unfor-

fortunate accident. "It is now just a fortnight, since I have been called to sing of mercy and of judgment. Of mercy, that I had no broken bones through a dangerous fall; of judgment, that I am still kept a prisoner at home, deprived of the privilege of working for my Master; nor, from the tardy appearance of the healing of a wound on my leg, do I know when I shall be released. What pleases the Lord, oftentimes displeases us; and yet we at all times ought to say, whatever is, is best. If we could but get more out of self, the hell of self, and live more in God, we shall live more to his glory." A short time after, he writes:—

*June 3rd, 1819.*

MY DEAR BROTHER JONES,

I thought to have sent you another letter before now, respecting the state of my wounded leg; but I have waited, that I might inform you precisely, when I should be permitted to take such a journey, under the pressure of such a wound, till I can wait no longer. Hitherto, I find the least exertion brings on an increased inflammation, which throws me back. I have only preached once for these six weeks, to a small congregation, on a Friday morning; and though I sat all the time, I was supposed to be the worse for it. The wound, however, this day begins to look more favourable, and I should trust my confinement will not be long. I should hope, at furthest, another week or ten days from hence, will give me some hopes of a release. I feel as much for you as I can for myself. I know you will soon want a release, and I should be sorry not to have a little of your company, before you take your flight. Here I am quite useless:

I wish to be doing, though it is but a little. O that we may be anxious to work while we can. The more we have to do for God, the more we shall feel the need of living near to God, as nothing can be well done for him, but what is done entirely by him. If all our works are not begun, continued, and ended in God, they are of nothing worth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Love to all

Yours affectionately,

R. HILL.

It has been well remarked, that it is a good sign when affliction draws us near to God, instead of driving us from him. This was eminently the case with Mr Hill : the pressure of suffering never weighed him down, it only tried and proved the true strength of the principles by which he was upheld. As soon as he felt a Father's rod, he acknowledged the chastisement as a correction of love, and endeavoured to improve by it. That which seemed in him, at times, like impatience, was only his anxiety to be again at work, from which it was with the utmost difficulty he could be restrained. In one of the many letters kindly lent me by the correspondents of my excellent relative, I found these useful remarks on the benefit of trials. —“We are made up of sad, thoughtless, inattentive materials, liable to be allured with present objects, more than we should be. In this carnal state, we are terribly apt to be carnally minded, and this generates death to the soul. To have a life hid with Christ in God, is a state infinitely beyond that which human nature can ever reach. He that created souls alone can re-create them, and enable us to live above ourselves

and above the world, that we may be brought into a state of newness to God. For the accomplishment of this sacred purpose, we must have our afflictions on the earth. We all are born to have them as sinners, and, when born again, they are perpetually needed to bring us near to God: and as we are prone to perpetual backslidings and revoltings, a repetition of them is equally needed, to prevent us from getting wanton, careless, and secure. Holy patience is not the natural growth of the human heart, yet in that frame of mind, we can alone find our resting place in a trying hour:—we must be *still*, that we may know the Lord our God.”

Nothing was more remarkable in Mr. Hill, than his keenness in discerning the varied peculiarities of human beings, and the accuracy with which he discriminated between different shades of character. To the humble christian, he was all tenderness and affection, but shewed little mercy, to those given to hypocrisy or cant. He once rebuked an antinomian who was addicted to drinking; when the man asked him impertinently—“Now do you think, Mr. Hill, a glass of spirits will drive grace out of my heart?” “No,” he answered, “for there is none in it.” When persons who had obtained pecuniary advantages, by methods scarcely consistent with the holy life of a christian, spoke of them as *providential*, he used to observe—“Well, you may think it was Providence, but say no more to me about that.” Writing to a friend, connected with a town in which there were many antinomians and socinians, Mr. Hill remarks—“What between the black frost of antinomianism, and the white frost of socinianism, no wonder that the growth of spiritual vegetation is so corrupt and starved. Nothing

but redemption by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and sanctification by the power and Spirit of Christ, can give life to the dead, and make the wilderness to blossom as the rose."

January 1820 found Mr. Rowland Hill in London, quite recovered from the injury in his leg. Writing to Mr. O. P. Wathen, he says, in a letter dated the sixth of that month—"Through the mercy of God, we both, considering what *antiques* we are, continue very well, and we should be abundantly better still, if blest with that spiritual health which can keep the soul alive to God." Mr. Hill used often to make preaching excursions in the spring, for the benefit of various religious societies. About this time he came into the neighbourhood of Cambridge, and hearing that he was to preach at Royston, a village about ten miles from the University, I went there to meet him. It wanted little more, when I arrived, than an hour to the time fixed for the sermon; the place of worship had long been filled with a dense crowd, and numbers were watching for him, on the road by which he was expected to enter the town. Presently, a chaise drove up at a rapid pace, containing Mr. Hill and his friend, Mr. Burder, the former of whom, the instant he recognized me, desired the post-boy to stop, and I went with him to the house where he was to be set down. After a few minutes' conversation, he accepted an offer made him of a room to himself, till summoned to the pulpit, and those who supposed his object was to arrange his ideas for the sermon, were surprised that he invited me to go with him. When we were alone, he inquired anxiously about the religious state of the University, and talked of various other matters, till it wanted only ten minutes to the time for calling him into the chapel, where Mr. Bur-



der had begun the service. I said, "Sir, I shall most assuredly not hear you to-day, for it is impossible to get into the place, which is already overflowing, so please to tell me what text you are going to preach from." "That is more than I know myself," he replied, and began turning over the leaves of an old bible on the table. Before he had completed his search, somebody entered to inform him it was time to go. "Sidney," said he, "catch hold of the back of my gown, and we will squeeze in,"—and a squeeze indeed we found it. When he was in the pulpit, I observed he still turned the leaves of the bible; but at length he stopped, to give out for his text the words of Isaiah, xliii, 21: *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise*; and I certainly never heard him preach better, on the necessity of evidencing the power of the grace of God in the heart, by a life of dedication to his glory. This was only one of the many times I perceived, that he left the selection of his text, to the very last moment.

After labouring as usual in London and at Wotton, Mr. Rowland Hill made, in the autumn of 1820, a long preaching expedition; during which he wrote the following characteristic letter to Mr. Jones:—

*Manchester, August 22nd, 1820.*

MY DEAR BROTHER JONES,

By now I suppose you are again settled, after your Welch ramble, at Wotton: may the seed sown meet with a divine increase! We do nothing; God must do every thing. Old as I am, I am well worked wherever I go. The congregations are every where astonishing; sometimes, for want of room, I am obliged to turn out in the open air. . . . . At

times, I trust, the power of God is felt among us ; if we think we can do without him, we may depend upon it he will do nothing by us. He will, and he ought to have all the glory. I hate dry, doctrinal preaching, without warm, affectionate, and experimental applications. When we feel what we are at, others will feel too ; but when our own *sham* feelings are substituted in the room of real ones, the people will soon detect us, while this false fire will not communicate any real warmth to the heart. It is poor work to attempt to move the mere passions of others, but as our own hearts are divinely influenced by that power which is from above. I fear you have felt much from the misconduct of some during your absence. You will be informed how we were constrained to act towards them. What wisdom, fidelity, and prudence, are necessary in the management of the christian church !

I can, however, tell you of another event, which, if accomplished, may prove a great blessing to the neighbourhood. Mr. —, Mr. —'s son-in-law, has determined to wind up all his mercantile concerns, and be a resident in our neighbourhood ; and by what he says, the nearer he can be to us, the better he will like it. He means not to take a settled charge, but to give his unsettled aid, wherever it may be needed. I mention this, that we may be on the look out. He is much beloved by all who know him.

It is my design to see Wotton again, with the Lord's leave, some time before the second sabbath in September, in order to prepare for a missionary meeting in our town ; though, I fear, we may have some dry doings among us, through the stiffness of some who may have the settlement of that work.

Will you tell John, the gardener, that he must take some opportunity to bring some loads of stone from

the neighbourhood of Mr. ——'s mill, which is very hard and good. This must be broken *very very* small; though, perhaps, the road had better not be relaid till nearer the winter season. Will you tell him, at the same time, . . . . . also to gather the lavender as it gets ripe, and some of the ripest of the balm of Gilead. You must also give my love to all the people, requesting their prayers, that I may not be permitted to suffer spiritual decline in my declining days; and may you, my dear brother, have that faith and love which the Holy Ghost can alone create in our hearts; grow in grace exceedingly; and, while you can slay your tens of thousands, and I my thousands only, go on and prosper, [and], I trust, I shall heartily rejoice in your success. Never doubt but that I am

Your ever affectionate brother,

R. HILL.

From Manchester, Mr. Rowland Hill went to pay a visit to his relations in Shropshire, by whom he was received with the utmost kindness and affection, and was invited to preach in some churches, in the neighbourhood of the family residence. Mrs. Hill notices this in a letter to Mr. Jones, in which she informs him, that they shall not return to Wotton as soon as they expected, on account of the pressing invitation they had received to prolong their stay. She says—“Mr. Hill preached at Stanton church last evening, and to-day at the chapel, where the family attend. Next Sunday [he is to preach] in a church at Wellington. How can he ever bear,” she adds, jocosely, “to preach at such a poor place as Wotton Tabernacle again, after being such a churchman!” Indeed,

as has been before mentioned, nothing gave him such unfeigned delight as being offered a pulpit in the establishment. It would, at any time, induce him to alter his unimportant arrangements, and cause him to prolong his stay, in whatever neighbourhood such an attraction occurred.

It is well known, that numbers of poor people are kept away from the worship of God on the sabbath, by their inability to make a decent appearance; and the attention of Mr. Rowland Hill was drawn towards the best mode of supplying them with the requisite clothing. This he communicated in a letter to his truly-generous friend, Mr. John Broadley Wilson.

*Wotton, November 16th, 1820.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Our good friends at Surry chapel, and others, have a design of extending the plan of religious instruction among the poor, by seeking after some of the lower classes, whose want of decent clothing prevents their attendance. It is therefore designed to lend them a sort of Sunday livery for that purpose, under a supposition, that by giving them a taste for profitable instruction, they may be roused from their degraded state.

It is therefore in contemplation, to convene a public meeting for that purpose, some time after the 28th of this month, while it is concluded the most eligible spot for such a meeting would be the boys' school belonging to the British and Foreign School Society, Borough-road, and you, being one of the committee belonging to that institution, are requested to forward the application.

With most affectionate respects to yourself and Mrs. Wilson, believe me to be,

My dear Sir,

Most sincerely and gratefully yours,

ROWLAND HILL.

I will conclude this chapter with a letter written by Mr. Hill to a very pious and amiable young minister, whose sickness, alluded to in it, terminated fatally.<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

A letter, received yesterday from Mrs. Neale, informs me of the painful situation of your health; and I am grieved to hear, that at least for the present, you are obliged to leave your sphere of usefulness at Exeter, and to seek your native air for the recovery of your health. The Lord's ways are frequently in the deep. Let us still hope that the present dispensation is only designed to deepen your humility, to brighten your zeal, and enrich your experience in the divine life; and that you will be better taught to teach, by being tutored in the furnace of affliction—the better to serve in the sacred cause in which you are engaged. Pure metals shine the brighter the harder they are rubbed. The Lord alone can prepare our hearts to receive that splendor of light, whereby we are enabled to shine forth to his glory. If sharp trials are necessary for the accomplishment of this glorious end, what a mercy from God when he sends them! Still, when such as are likely to be useful are cast aside, it appears like a judgment we ought to lament—"Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth." While it is a great

<sup>1</sup> The person addressed in this letter was the son of the Rev. John Griffin, of Portsea, a memoir of whom was written and published by his bereaved father.

mercy to live to be useful, yet it is our greatest curse, to be cumberers of the ground ; and when such cumberers intrude themselves into the ministry of the word, they prove the greatest curse to the living church of Christ. May you be deeply sensible, how much of the life and power of God is needed upon your soul, to make you an able minister of the New Testament, "Not of the letter, but of the Spirit, whose praise is not of man but of God." May your life be granted for this purpose, and for this alone.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am still, through mercy, willing to work as long as I can, and as hard as I can. It is a mercy to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," and then the next word sounds like a gracious promise, our "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

With very kind love to your father and to your new mother, who, I am told, is a very excellent woman, believe me to be,

Your very affectionate

ROWLAND HILL.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### *The society at Surry chapel.*

I HAVE already mentioned the importance attached by Mr. Rowland Hill to a species of improving intercourse, between himself and the communicants at Surry chapel, called "Meeting the Society." His views upon this subject will be further gathered, from the notice he takes of it in a letter to Mr. Jones, who was about to supply his place there for a few Sundays. "I hope you will find meeting the society, on a Monday eve, pleasant to your mind. I generally speak to all fresh communicants, first in private, after having received a sufficient account, as far as it can be obtained among such a wilderness of people, and next encourage them to relate their experience to their fellow-communicants. But, if diffidence forbids them, I speak for them, and tell before their faces what they have previously told me. I have oftentimes found that the most modest have proved amongst the best; but it is difficult to act in London, as in the country, where people are most easily known. I always call upon one of the brethren to introduce that service with prayer, and sometimes requests another to conclude. Poor — is as dry as a stick. When strangers at-



tend at Surry chapel, such ministers as do not like our sort of church government, make it more like a public preaching than a society meeting. This I do not like, but we cannot have every thing just as we like. When I am in town, I give them to understand *that* meeting is only for the communicants. I drop these hints ; I wish you may improve upon the plan."

An aged and experienced minister's views of the nature of his own office are always valuable, and, therefore, I feel assured a letter to me, when I was first ordained, will not be considered an unnecessary addition to what has been already given on the same subject.

*Wotton, July 26th, 1821.*

MY DEAR SIDNEY,

I am ashamed I have not written to you since you have been Revd. I had been meditating upon a long letter to you, such as a primitive bishop should write to one just set off in the sacred work to which you have been called ; but when I cannot write as I should, I do not like to write at all. Still for a few words. No real good can be expected, even from the private christian, where the ground-work of religion is wanting—*Regeneration*. As well may you pretend to know what were the real transactions of life before you were born, as to know any thing of real religion, which is nothing less than the life of God in the souls of men, till after you are born again. By that alone we feel sin to be hateful, and, as we feel against it, we shall be able to preach feelingly against it. This begets genuine repentance, the harbinger of all future good. The Lord Jesus sent his harbinger, John the Baptist, to urge this, his first message, home to the heart. A young minister, if the Lord designs

to bless him, will begin with the law, charging the sinful violations of it home to the conscience, in a bold and fearless, but still in a tender and compassionate spirit. The law, not that neutralized modern stuff, that some call morality, but that infinitely holy and pure law, which is the exact transcript of the image of God himself, before the sound of which every mouth must be stopped, "and all the world become guilty before God, for that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And, till sinners feel the justice of this law, and own their guilt as transgressors, though the gospel may be admitted in theory, yet it never can be admitted as the power of God to the salvation of the soul, or felt as such in its transforming influences, in making us new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Till this divine influence be duly felt, every young minister, especially if he be of a captivating turn of mind, is in perpetual danger of being captivated and ensnared by the world. When this begins to take place, he will first attempt the impossibility of serving God and mammon at the same time. When he has proved the impracticability of such an effort, he will give himself up to the service of mammon altogether. If you wish to gain a character as a minister of the word of life, you must first lose it entirely in the esteem of the world, and then gain it, by your upright and holy zeal, by your complete deadness to the world, that you may give yourself wholly to the work of the ministry, and spend and be spent in the sacred cause. Half-way work is odious in every profession, but in the work of God, most abominable. Such as honour Christ shall be honoured by him. You have sufficient knowledge of the gospel, to know that it is a glorious gospel, while the thin, meagre religion of the world is beneath contempt.

Though you seem to have set sail under the auspices of a prosperous gale, yet storms and tempests may soon await you; and, when needed, the Lord will send them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Satan cannot break his chain, and the bolder you are, if tempered with wisdom from above, the more timid will your enemies be. Mind this passage—go beyond it if you can—"Be you steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." Mrs. N., now with us, has this day received a letter from your late tutor, Mr. N. It is surprising what a glorious change has passed upon his mind. O my dear youth, pray for a well grounded assurance, that a power as glorious has been, in very deed, communicated to your mind, as the only genuine evidence that you were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you that most sacred office you have been called to fill! O that you may be filled with all that high spirituality Mr. Neale *now* evidently and eminently possesses, with your own *natural* animation and vivacity of spirit.

\* \* \* \* \*

But just room for

Yours affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

In a subsequent letter to me, on the same subject, he remarks, "No eminent blessing attends such as do not labour to be blest; while such as are favored with a sound head, a warm heart, and a bible creed, carry all before them."

Mr. Rowland Hill's memoranda of engagements, in his interleaved Almanack of 1821, are more numerous than ever, both as to causes supported by him, and places of preaching. He thought nothing of six or seven sermons a week, besides meeting his people and attending to the business of societies for benevolent or religious objects ; and, although he occasionally complained of langour, his spirits never failed him, nor did his mind appear in the slightest degree overworked. He seemed, however, to be impressed with perpetually increasing convictions, as to the solemnity and importance of his sacred office. His words, in a letter, are, "O for more of the Spirit to make us preach spiritually! By the aid of our bibles and good books, we may collect good materials together ; but, unless the Lord himself sends down the celestial fire, there can be neither light nor warmth from the very best of these dead materials. Jesus, the Lord, and giver of life, keeps all in his own hands, to keep our souls dependent on himself." Speaking of a young baptist preacher, whose sermons were full of dry theology, with little or no unction, he called him—"A sprig of made-up divinity, from a cold water academy."

The undiminished willingness of Mr. Rowland Hill to labour, in his old age, will be seen by the account the following extract from a letter, dated January 23rd, 1822, gives of his probable acquiescence in an arduous journey for the London Missionary Society:—"The Missionary Society is sinking for want of support ; they have astonishing openings before them, for which astonishing exertions must be made. Now, they tell me, no minister that travels to beg for them, puts them to less expense, and gets so much money for

them [as I do] when I can take a journey for them. And now you shall hear the plan they have designed for an old man, in the 78th year of his age. I am to set off from hence directly after the missionary meeting, Monday, the 13th May, and then travel quite up as far as York, 200 miles from hence, taking Lincoln, Hull, and several other large towns, in my way thither, and on my return." After some other observations, relative to the alteration this plan must make in his usual movements, he adds, "Though, at my time of life, I should rather seek after rest than attempt such extraordinary labours, yet, may it be spoken with humility, it cannot be denied that these latter itinerations of my ministry have been attended with abundant indications of the power of God to the souls of men, and have proved times of general refreshment from the presence of the Lord."

A return of inflammation in Mr. Hill's eye caused the postponement of this journey to the 10th of June, and, by his own memoranda, it appears that he preached every day from that time till the 11th of July. The congregations and collections were immense, but the undertaking was too much for his strength; and daily preaching, in very hot weather, brought on a complaint which weakened and depressed him. At the end of a letter he notices this effect of such exertions in his own brief manner: "O how hard I have been worked. Thousands attend field-preaching. Frequently almost tired. Still I am upheld, though I was seriously ill."

This year Mr. Hill manifested his attachment to the establishment, by an act of the most creditable liberality. A clergyman, whose religious views corresponded with his own, became curate of the church

at Wotton, when he immediately ordered his chapel to be shut up in an afternoon, desired his congregation to go to church, and himself set them the example.

About this time Mr. Rowland Hill made an eastern tour, for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, visiting Norwich, Yarmouth, and Bury St. Edmund's. He had not been in the latter place for nearly half a century, always refusing to go there, as if oppressed by the painful recollection of violent persecution from the world, and coolness in professors of religion, he had experienced fifty years before in that town. He now met with the kindest possible reception, but appeared under most solemn impressions. When he saw vehicles of all descriptions coming in, filled with those who were flocking to hear him, he exclaimed several times—"What shall I do, a poor sinful, unworthy creature, how shall I preach to this people?" A gentleman remarked—"I am surprised, sir, that you should be so much agitated, I could never have supposed that you felt in this way;" to which Mr. Hill replied—"I always feel a great deal before I preach, but I am unusually agitated to night." The place in which he was to preach could not contain nearly all who thronged for admission; hundreds stood without the walls, and the crowd seemed to increase his excitement. A person present says—"He gave out his text, laying a peculiar emphasis on the first word, *Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*: Ps. ii, 8. In the course of his sermon, he spoke most affectingly of the state and extent of the Redeemer's possession—the whole heathen world. The ground of the Redeemer's plea—in

which he illustrated the connection between the dignity of his person and the merits<sup>2</sup> of his death ; and in the most striking manner, he finally set forth the certainty of the fulfilment of the text, as the Father's promise and the Redeemer's plea. In the whole discourse, there was an elevated and sublime range of ideas, and a simplicity and majesty of language, which arrested the attention and astonished the minds of the whole audience. The part of the application, in which he appealed to his hearers on attending to the duty, and cultivating the spirit of prayer, in imitation of Christ, will never be forgotten." As Mr. Rowland Hill came down from the pulpit, he took Mr. Dewhirst, the worthy minister of the chapel, by the hand, and, bursting into tears, said—"Good Mr. Dewhirst, O that I could be more useful to souls the little time I have to live!" His prayer on this occasion was answered, by the conversion of some, and the excitement of a more ardent devotion in others. So delighted were the people of Bury with Mr. Rowland Hill's sermon, that they pressed him, in the spring of 1822, to return to them once more, but he was unable to accept the invitation. In a letter to Mr. Dewhirst on the subject, he says—"What a kind set of people you must have with you at Bury, to make so much of the poor defective services you had from me. How true it must be, that the excellency of the power is not of man, but from the Lord alone ; and the more we are enabled to depend on him, the more he will honour that dependence, by a glorious manifestation of it to the souls of men ; and the more we watch the

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hill generally choose the phrase, the *atonement* of Christ's death—"Merits," he said to me one day, "is commonly used, but it conveys only a *thin* idea of reconciliation to God through the death of his Son—*atonement* (once separated from God by sin, now *at one* again)—*atonement* is the word I like."



progress of that grace, the more we shall see, how little the great head of the church regards those human distinctions, among the different churches of Christ, and the nearer shall we be united to each other, for our mutual good. When the gospel comes not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, that sets all right; and then, with one heart and one mind, we can all glorify God as one. If a spirit of bigotry has set us suarling at each other, this powerful influence drives it all away: the blessed union created thereby makes hell tremble, while all hands are strengthened."

Mr. Rowland Hill, after his labours in the country in 1822, was just on the eve of departure to London, when he had the misfortune to be seriously bruised, and to break one of his ribs by an accident. He prevailed on Mr. Jones to go immediately and supply his place at Surry chapel, till he should recover; and on feeling himself a little better, he wrote to him in the following terms:—

MY DEAR BROTHER JONES,

Soon after you left us, I felt myself more severely and universally injured than I at first supposed. The fractured rib is frequently the cause of much pain. The accumulation of phlegm occasionally creates a cough, [and] the pain I then feel is excessive. O for patience to prove the event. This is the first time I have attempted to use the pen, though my right arm and shoulder are so exceedingly shaken, that it is as much as I can accomplish to lift my arm to the table, so as to hold my pen. In short, wherever I am placed, there I must continue, but as I borrow the strength of others to be removed from place to place,

though I seem to be a shade better since yesterday. I conceive it necessary to be thus particular, that future supplies may be properly considered. When the calamity first happened, I conceived I might be able just to creep towards the pulpit, and deliver somewhat like an apology for a sermon. Under this impression, I advised you to go to London; but as matters are, it might have been best had you continued on the spot. You know what a miserable shift we are, on such occasions, obliged to make. Mr. — will be with us on sabbath morning (to-morrow) and — in the eve; and, on the sabbath afterwards, we must contrive such another patch. As, therefore, the people in London may help themselves a little better than we can do at this place, the sooner you return the better. Still, it occurs to my mind, that if between this and a fortnight hence, I should be so far restored, as that I could preach two half sermons, and procure others to read and pray, such a service would be better accepted, than what could be obtained from the generality of our supplies. Of this you shall have timely notice; and after that I should remove slowly to town, and you would return to your winter post, where all will be most affectionately glad to see you. I am tired of writing. Love to all.

Yours affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

*Thy will be done.*

On all these occasions, Mr. Hill's anxiety was more for the good and comfort of others than for himself. On hearing of his accident, I immediately begged that every information might be sent me as to the prospects and progress of his recovery, about

which I naturally felt most deeply anxious. To a long and kind letter from Mrs. Hill on the subject, he added a postscript in these words—"Yes, through the mercy of God, I am abundantly better, though still, when in bed, I cannot turn, but as I am turned. O that I may be able to spend the very, very few remainder of my days to his glory, by whom I have hitherto been kept. But you say nothing about yourself.

\* \* \* \* \*

When you come, I shall do my best to prove that I am

Yours most affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

Mr. Hill recovered with astonishing rapidity, and commenced the year 1823 with, if we may judge from his notes of engagements, more activity than ever. It was a rare occurrence indeed for him to name the day, while in London, which he could call his own. The more he had to do, the happier he appeared; and, though increasing years brought with them a sense of diminished strength, his desire to work never decreased. This is shewn by his own written remark—"Through the mercy of God, my will for labour is where it was, but my ability begins to fail. I look upon myself to have been most mercifully favoured through life, and wish to meet my declining days with holy calmness and resignation to my heavenly Father's will. May he increase spirituality where he denies strength, and bless me with a more abundant influence of his grace and spirit in my declining days." After a season of great activity in London, and what always seemed to renew his energies, an excellent missionary

collection at Surry chapel, amounting £425, he went to Wotton, preaching, as was his custom, every evening except the Saturday, at places on his journey, which he usually made last the week. He travelled with his own horses by easy stages, and was looked for with the most anxious expectation wherever a sermon from him was announced. Nothing escaped him on the road, and his remarks were generally extremely pointed and entertaining. I remember once being with him on a journey in the West of England, which he enlivened all the way by his animated observations; at length we passed a chapel, belonging to a sect in no great favour with him, on the front of which was a large board, with an inscription, indicating to what party it belonged. Looking up quickly, he said—"What's that?" and on my reading it, observed, with his drollest expression of countenance—"They had better do like the old washerwomen, who put up over their doors—*Mangling done here.*"

After the accustomed enjoyments of his lovely place in Gloucestershire, mingled with his usual quantity of labour, Mr. Rowland Hill proceeded, in the autumn of 1823, on a long and arduous missionary tour.<sup>3</sup> He enjoyed an unusually strong state of health

<sup>2</sup> I have thought it worth while to give from his memoranda, the following arrangement for August and September, 1823, to shew what a plan of exertion my venerable relative had marked out for himself at 78 years of age, a period at which most old men naturally look for quiet, indulgence, and repose.

<i>August, 1823.</i>		12 Weymouth, Dorchester	24 Tavistock
1		13 Bridport	25 Plymouth
2		14 Sidmouth	26 Plymouth
3		15 Exmouth	27 Plymouth
4		16 Exeter	28 Ashburton
5		17 Exeter	29 Totness
6 Trowbridge		18 Exeter	30 Kingsbridge
7 Bruton		19 Tiverton	31 Dartmouth
8 Sherborne		20 Barnstaple	
9 Weymouth		21 Bideford	<i>September, 1823.</i>
10 Weymouth		22 Oakhampton	1 Kingsbridge
11 Weymouth		23 Tavistock	2 Yeovil
			3 Castle Cary

this autumn, and went through his herculean task with the most perfect comfort to himself, and no small benefit to the cause he espoused. On August 23rd, 1823, he entered on his 79th year, and kept his birthday, not with rest and festivity, but by a sermon at Tavistock; desiring that the day of his own nativity should be the date of the new birth unto righteousness in others, till then dead in trespasses and sins.

In the spring of 1824 Mr. Rowland Hill was found engaged, with the same self-denial and earnestness as ever, in the cause of religion. Mrs. Hill says, in a letter dated March 16th—"Mr. Hill is gone into the city on business, and from thence to Hackney to preach. In short, he has so much to do, that I am astonished his strength holds out; but I desire to be thankful for the wonderful health he has." It was this year proposed to him to revisit Scotland once more in the summer, and he thus announced his acceptance of the invitation to a correspondent—"You will be surprised to hear that, old as I am, I have actually engaged to travel so far as Scotland. Though I fear I may have promised too much for my time of life; yet I must look up to the strong for strength. I go directly from hence to Edinburgh by water." On the night of June 2, Mr. Hill went on board a steam vessel, which left the river Thames on the Wednesday morning, and arrived safe at Edinburgh on the Friday following. When about midway on his voyage, he was requested by two Scotch members of parliament to address the passengers, and readily as-

4 Wincaston	10 Shepton Mallet	16 Old Town
5 South Potherton	11 Homeward	17 Kingswood
6 Pounsford—dinner	12 Bristol	18 Hawkesbury
7 Sacrament Pounsford	13	19 Newport
— and Taunton	14 Home (prob. 3 times)	20
8 Wellington	15 Society	21 Wotton
9 Bridgwater		

assented to their proposal. The subject chosen, was our Lord's sermon on the mount, on which he commented in a natural, easy, and impressive manner, for about three quarters of an hour. Though in his eightieth year, Mr. Hill stood the whole time, to the astonishment of his hearers, and the power which accompanied his words produced an effect upon all present, of no ordinary nature. As soon as he had concluded, the whole assembly of about sixty persons, pressed forward to shake hands and thank him; and it was evident that they had heard with serious attention, a message of truth delivered under a sense of its infinite importance, solemnized by the reflection that the aged lips from which it came, must, in a few years more, be closed in the silence of death. He often mentioned this interesting event with the most pleasing recollections, and spoke in grateful terms of the many kind attentions shewn him during the whole voyage.

On reaching Edinburgh, he was most hospitably welcomed at the house of the Rev. J. Aikman, near Heriot's Hospital, who very obligingly sent me the following account of his visit:—"I regret that I am able to say so little respecting the last visit of your late venerable and highly esteemed relative to this city, as his stay was so very short, scarcely completing a week. But this I can say with confidence, that his unexpected appearance amongst us, after an absence of twenty-five years, was hailed with much delight by christians of all denominations, and especially by those who had attended his ministrations, during his former visits to this country. On the morning of the only sabbath he spent in Edinburgh, he preached to a crowded congregation in our chapel, of upwards of 1,500 persons, many being prevented access from the

multitude which thronged the doors, and for whom there was no accommodation. In the evening, he preached to a still larger congregation in Dr. Peddie's (of the secession church) place of worship. He was listened to, on both occasions, with the greatest interest, and considering the advanced age he had now attained, his appearances, while highly creditable to his talents, were still more illustrative of that ardent zeal in the adorable Redeemer, and that fervent piety and love to the souls of men, by which the whole career of his long, laborious, and most eminently useful life has been so much distinguished. His friends here were fearful lest he might sustain injury, by his pulpit and other exertions; but such was the earnest desire he had to embrace every opportunity, of promoting the interests of that great cause which had so long engaged all his energies, that he unhesitatingly engaged, if I mistake not, during every day he remained with us, to preach in different places of worship in the city. He preached in the Tabernacle for his old friend, Mr. James Haldane, in the Albany-street chapel, and on the evening previously to his quitting us, in the large chapel of the secession church near Broughton-place, to an overflowing audience. In the whole of his sermons he was heard with the most respectful attention, and with all that affectionate regard which the knowledge of his honourable character, and his long, faithful, and disinterested services in the best of causes so justly inspired. On reaching Glasgow, he was introduced shortly after his arrival, if I recollect right, to a public meeting of the friends of christianity, assembled for the promotion of some one of those great and philanthropic schemes, for the spiritual benefit of our fellow-men, which so happily mark the character



of the period in which our lot is cast ; and his appearance in the midst of them, while welcomed by the most cordial and joyous congratulations, and his paternal and affectionate address, gave an impulse to the meeting, of no ordinary kind. His exertions in the week, were of a similar character with those by which his short residence here was marked, and while, in leaving us, we experienced a measure of that feeling which prevailed in the breasts of the Ephesian brethren, when taking leave of Paul—"that they should see his face no more in the flesh," we were yet soothed by the reflection, that the Lord in his adorable providence, had permitted us once more to see and hear *him*, in whose former labours many of us had felt so deep an interest, and of which labours, and I can speak of what came under my own personal knowledge, there is fruit gathered many years since into the heavenly garner, and fruit still on earth, to be conveyed there in the due and appointed season."

The Monday after his arrival in Edinburgh, Mr. Rowland Hill visited, with the greatest interest, the scenes of his past labours. On the Calton Hill he stood for a few minutes, in silent and pensive contemplation of the spot, wherein former days, he had addressed assembled thousands on the momentous concerns of the eternal world ; and then adverted alternately to the magnificent landscape before him, and to the times in which, standing on that very soil, he had felt his spirit stirred within him, to point out to the careless and to the ignorant, the only road to the bright and everlasting glories of a heavenly existence. Mr. Hill went to Glasgow by the track boat, embarking at Grangemouth, a small village in Stirlingshire, and his presence excited an intense interest in the

people, who crowded to see him. He remained on deck nearly the whole time of the passage, enjoying, without fatigue, the beautiful scenery through which he passed. Mr. Hill was received at Glasgow with enthusiasm, and became the chief object of attraction, during the bustle and excitement of a week's religious festival. At Paisley he preached in the High church, and proceeded to Greenock, where he spent several days, that he might refresh himself by excursions on the lakes. On his departure, numbers followed him to the water's edge, to take a parting look and bid a long farewell to the aged minister, whose hoary hairs and furrowed cheeks foretold that he was quitting the shores of Scotland for ever. After a boisterous voyage, in a steam vessel, Mr. Hill reached Liverpool at three in the morning; he went to bed till eight o'clock, when he arose to breakfast, and was sufficiently recovered by the evening to address an overflowing congregation in the chapel of Dr. Raffles. "It is no use trying to get in," said a man, "they run over like peas from a bushel,"—and so they did in every place during this entire journey. The same sensation was excited at Manchester, by Mr. Hill's staying to preach there on his way to Hawkstone, his birth place, and to Hardwick, the seat of Lord Hill. After a most kind reception from his family, he returned to Wotton, delighted with his tour, and the success of the collections, which amounted to nearly sixteen hundred pounds. On his arrival, Mrs. Hill wrote me word:—"All his friends here were pleased to see him look so well, and I doubt not but you will feel the same pleasure by the information you receive. Through mercy he was protected on his journey, though he had a terrible voyage on his return from Scotland. I hope

from all I hear, that his visit to the North will not be in vain. I understood from —, who was there at the same time, that the respect shewn him was very great, which you know is very pleasing to flesh and blood ; but what is much better, vast crowds attended his preaching, and from the immense multitude, we may hope some might be called from darkness to light, from sin to God."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *Pastoral character of Mr. Rowland Hill.*

AMPLE justice has been done, by the admirers of Mr. Rowland Hill, to the power and spirituality of his preaching, the splendour of which somewhat overpowered the gentler, but not less admirable light of his character, as a pastor and adviser of those benefited by truths, faithfully and impressively declared from the pulpit. Some, indeed have ventured to insinuate, that he was found wanting, in the discharge of this essential part of ministerial duty; I shall therefore devote the following chapter, to instances of Mr. Hill's private intercourse with his people, in which he was an example truly worthy to be followed, by all who have undertaken the solemn charge of "watching for souls, as men that must give an account." I am happily confirmed in my view of Mr. Rowland Hill's vigilance over his converts, by the opinion of others, who had abundant opportunities of observing it. One of these,<sup>1</sup> an excellent and well known dissenting minister, kindly wrote to me on this subject, and I cannot do better than avail myself of his judicious testimony. In adverting to his acquaintance with Mr. Hill, he says,

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. George Clayton.

“there is nothing in life that I look back upon with more pleasure, than the neighbourly and friendly intercourse, I was for a long series of years, permitted to enjoy with that eminent servant of Jesus Christ. One or two points I should like to be noticed in his memoirs, which happening to fall under my immediate observation, and perhaps not equally so under that of others, are deserving of a lasting record, as illustrative of his character, and as entitled to imitation. There are many who knew and admired him in the character of a *preacher*, who possibly give him less credit than they ought in the character of a *pastor*. During the months he was in town, he not only filled the pulpit, but he *watched* and *tended* the flock. Calling on him one morning at Surry chapel house, seven or eight years ago,<sup>2</sup> I found him attired for going abroad. He said he was going a round of pastoral visitation, and very courteously invited me to accompany him. Having an hour or two to spare, I readily complied. He first conducted me to the almshouses, and passing from one apartment to another, he gave a word of exhortation and comfort to the old ladies; and with one of them, confined by illness, he offered up a prayer, very short, but admirable for its simplicity, spirituality, and adaptation. We then proceeded to some of the most wretched hovels, which abound in the back streets of that neighbourhood. Several of these were inhabited by pious poor. He spoke to them with tender sympathy, and the most lovely condescension. One or two he admonished for their slovenly neglect and want of cleanliness, reminding them that godliness should make people tidy and

<sup>2</sup> It should be recollected that Mr. Rowland Hill was then more than eighty years of age.

clean in their habits. With some he left money ; with some he offered prayer—to all he gave kind looks, kind words, and his blessing. Coming out of a room that was certainly *very dirty*, he exclaimed, ‘we must endure all things for the salvation of souls.’ After this, we entered the habitations of others of his charge, moving in what is called a respectable sphere of life. Among these, some of whom were the principal tradespeople in Southwark, he dropped a word in season, comforting the afflicted, warning their minds against impatience and fretfulness, and exhorting to perseverance and prayer. It was truly edifying to observe how he changed his tone and manner, according to the requirements of the case, and how truly ‘grace was poured into his lips’ while he went from house, to house as ‘the shepherd of his people.’” This is a most accurate description of Mr. Rowland Hill’s mode of visiting his people, a duty which no person ever more wisely or faithfully discharged. He balanced admirably between the *doing* and *overdoing* of this difficult part of a minister’s work—between the inattention which the people regard as a neglect, and those too frequent and hasty calls which are little valued, if not often considered intrusive. On these occasions too, he always went *as a minister*, and in no other character, and was careful to avoid all conversation but that which was profitable. He strongly urged upon the poor the necessity of every possible adornment of the christian character, particularly cleanliness : and used always to consider a slovenly person and a dirty house, as an evidence that religion had effected no salutary change in the character. The admirable neatness of the inmates of his alms-houses at Wotton, struck every one who visited them. The least

symptom of untidiness was noticed by him in an instant with "here, mistress, is a trifle for you to buy some soap and a scrub-brush—there is plenty of water to be had for nothing; good Mr. Whitefield used to say, 'cleanliness is next to godliness.'"

The solemn faithfulness of Mr. Rowland Hill's conversation with the sick, was always in the accents of love; and his concluding prayer seldom left a tearless eye in the chamber of the dying. His manner of pointing out to the penitent sufferer, the difference between the repentance of *fear* and *love*, was exceedingly clear, and often productive of the happiest effects. His attention also to the little comforts of the afflicted poor, made them feel that he really had their interests at heart. I have seen him early in the summer searching his garden, with a basket in his hand, for the few ripe strawberries he could find, to carry them himself to some sufferer, to whom they would prove a welcome refreshment; and when he offered this little present, it was with a most affectionate kindness of manner. I have before described the agitation under which Mr. Hill often laboured, when he left scenes of sickness and distress, and I think I can truly venture to affirm, that he sympathized most sincerely on all occasions, with the trials of each individual who confided in him. Not only were Mr. Rowland Hill's personal visits directed to the edification of his people, but he frequently corresponded with many of them, for the same laudable purpose. He wrote to a young gentlemen, to whom his ministry had been made useful, in the following kind and encouraging terms—"you, my dear young friend, should exceedingly magnify the grace of God, by which, I trust you have been called so early in life, to the



knowledge of himself, whom to know is life eternal, whom to serve is heaven upon earth. I am grieved at heart, that you have had too many stumbling blocks set before you, in what is called the religious world; still real religion is the same; there would be no counterfeits, if there was not real gold. The grace of God converts the heart and regulates the life in time, and ultimately brings us to himself in eternity; and such, amidst too many false professors, are still to be found, who prove themselves to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, and are enabled to shine as lights of the world."

To the same friend, on receiving tidings which his words will explain, Mr. Hill wrote—"your letter contains plenty of good news, and some of the best of it in a short compass. What a mercy, that your union has been attended with such a blessing to others of the same family. Miss —, you humbly trust, has been brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in God our Saviour, and Mrs. — begins to feel the like inclination towards the things of God. The more we feel our hearts brought into sweet union with God, the more will our union with each other be attended with such consequences, as are happy and blessed among ourselves. Peace and love from God, when shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit from above, is sure to produce peace and love among ourselves. What a perpetual hell possesses the minds of those, who are under the dominion of their corrupted passions, and what sweet serenity, what perfect peace do they enjoy, whose minds are stayed on God. O that we may enter into that state of spiritual rest which sweetens every cross, and renders our sharpest trials among the richest of our blessings in disguise!"

Mr. Hill was always a willing guide to those whom religion had involved in domestic trials, of which I shall give an instance, in his advice to a young lady under the deepest impressions, but much opposed at home. "The question you ask, how far it is right to abstain from conversing on religion upon parental authority, I [will] answer to the best of my ability. It is a happiness for you, dear madam, that you have not a desire or wish to converse upon any religious subjects, but such as the subject matter of our devotions in the public liturgy; and to be prohibited from ever speaking about that, which should be [our] present practice as well as [our] future hope, would be a strange prohibition indeed, and in direct violation of that express command, *let your conversation be always to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace to the hearers.* See also Deut. vi, 6—10; Mal. iii, 16, 17. Had you been unhappily led aside by Roman Catholics, by Socinians, or by any other sectarian sentiments, contrary to those sound doctrines taught by our established church, I should even then think it a hardship to impose a silence, while conscience, though in error, directs you to propagate what you conceive to be right. While at the same time [that] I might admire your upright zeal, I should do the utmost in my power to use no other weapons, but those of sound arguments, to refute your errors, and that by the most persuasive mildness to win by love, as well as to convince by truth. Let it therefore be hoped, that when your parents have fully discovered, you have not a wish to hint to any relative or friend, beyond what should be the daily practice of us all—a serious caution against such a conformity to the world, as must have a tendency to pollute the

mind, without any sanctimonious severity against others in matters that are indifferent, and that your faith is the common creed of all christians of the Protestant persuasion—when your parents have abundant evidence of this, they will feel their mistake, and find it their duty to permit you to live comfortable at home, and allow at least some variation of sentiments in you, which may not be altogether conformably to their own. I trust it will prove an argument greatly in your favour, that while you love the good man of every denomination, yet it is not your design or wish to deviate from the established church, or to make proselytes on such a low design; but if you can give good advice to such as are bad, and direct them to the Saviour, that he may change their hearts, I must say that no parental authority should prevent you from so good a work. If such are persecuted, it is for righteousness' sake, and then the spirit of God and of glory shall rest upon them: 1 Pet. iv, 12—18.

When asked his opinion upon the nature of schism, Mr. Rowland Hill replied—"the word schism is made frightful by misapplication. Our fellow subjects in Scotland are Presbyterians, should they not be allowed to be the same in England also, where we are Episcopalians? Why should I be prohibited from being an Episcopalian when there? Are we not to be permitted to choose our own church discipline, without being branded with such an odious appellation? A schismatic is a man of a turbulent bad spirit, to whatever party, respecting things that are indifferent, he may belong; but if we allow that these little shades of difference may exist, we ought to love as brethren, and where christian candour and love is found to reign, the odious sin of schism, according to its genuine interpretation, can never exist."

A young christian was so tried by opposition at home, as to be driven to enquire whether it might not be allowable to seek an opportunity of leaving the parental roof. Mr. Hill's reply to the question was, "I am truly sorry for your perplexity. To leave a parents' home I conceive is a step that would not be advisable, but under very severe and oppressive circumstances indeed. That separation from the world which we conceive real christianity inspires and demands, as it respects its sinful amusements and delights, may give considerable offence, and for a considerable time; but while we are directed by the grace of God which is in us, not to be conformed to this world, yet, under the guidance of that good sense which true religion naturally inspires, we shall be enabled to obviate the mistake, that we are not actuated by sour moroseness, but by an obedient attention to what we conceive to be the will of God, [and to shew] that we know how to keep up the distinction between pious cheerfulness and frothy levity, in our conversation in the world. It is this that will enable us to shew more cheerful obedience and affectionate attention, to such as have a natural authority over us; and it is to be hoped few will be found in this liberal and enlightened age, who will not be won by such patient continuance in well doing."

To an inquirer as to the duty of *fasting*, Mr. Rowland Hill writes—"you ask me about the duty of fasting. This seems more as a duty upon solemn occasions, than that which is enjoined upon us individually like other duties, which can never cease to exist. The duties of prayer, repentance, faith, love, watchfulness, holy patience, resignation and submission to the holy will of God, and a variety of others

of the same sort, should become the constant habit and practice of the mind ; and if at any time private fasting may be our duty, yet still we are directed as much as possible not to appear to fast before men, that the duty may be performed with greater sincerity before God. I believe we are much more called to regular abstinence, and constant mortification of every evil habit and desire, than to those particular acts that may occasionally be enjoined."

When advising a young christian as to conduct before worldly parents, he observes—"Much prejudice is found to arise in the minds of many, through mere mistake respecting what religion really is. A preposterous or caricatured misconception frequently occupies the mind, through misrepresentation or want of proper information. It is our mercy, however, that the wisdom and prudence which real religion inspires, is so well calculated to obviate these objections. It directs us to go to the bible alone, that our creed and conduct may be regulated thereby ; while it is not less favourable, to those who claim a relationship to the established church, [for] as she directs, so we believe. The awful truth of the depravity of the human race, is too notorious to be denied, and while reason tells us that he alone can forgive us, against whom the offence has been committed, revelation makes known to us the way whereby alone we can be forgiven, through him that suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ; not that we may wantonly live in sin, but that we may most powerfully be saved from it. And while this most important doctrine of the renewal of the heart, is made so much the subject of divine revelation, we find it not less the subject of our perpetual devotions, in the established church. Can we con-

ceive a higher strain of devotion, than what we have in that prayer in the communion service—"Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy holy name;" and further—"that we being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit?" It must be confessed, that if we live consistently with such devotions as these, we cannot live according to the course of this world, but we must live unto God. And here is our difficulty; a solemn cheerfulness is our privilege, while a sullen moroseness tends only to disgust. I trust your own good sense will direct you to this happy medium before your parents, while they are given to understand, by your increased affection and attention to them, that they may have full evidence, that they cannot have a child that loves them better, because you love and fear the Lord."

The kind feeling, added to his natural benevolence, with which religion inspired Mr. Rowland Hill, was continually manifested in his correspondence. Of this we have a pleasing specimen, in a letter to a little girl, the daughter of his friend Mr. Wathen.

MY DEAR MISS WATHEN,

How kind to correspond with such an old man, old enough to be your great grandfather. Should I ever be ground young again, I shall certainly remember your kind attention to me; but as I cannot find out where the mill is to be found that grinds old people into young ones, I can only advise my young friend, Miss Wathen, to follow the excellent advice of her parents, whereby she will be directed to be

wise and good ; but not without the Lord should bless her with his grace, whereby she alone can be enabled to live to his glory. With love to your most dear parents, believe me to be,

Most affectionately yours,

ROWLAND HILL.

From these specimens of Mr. Rowland Hill's correspondence, it will be seen how vigilantly, affectionately, and wisely he discharged the office of a pastoral guide and adviser of his followers. He was not without his failings as a man ; his peculiar course it would be vain, as it would be unwise, for any other individual to attempt to follow ; but as respects his character as a shepherd of the flock, the greatest honour we can pay his memory, is to imitate his watchfulness, prudence, and affectionate patience towards all who sought the benefit of his counsel.

Another admirable feature in the character of Mr. Rowland Hill, was the discretion which he exercised in the distribution of his numerous charities. Indiscreet benevolence, however diffusive, confers no real benefit on society ; and it is as morally wrong to encourage imposture in the lower orders, as it is to refuse them the assistance their necessities require. To this Mr. Hill was perfectly alive ; and, besides the judicious visits of the members of the Surry chapel Benevolent Society, he used every means in his power to inquire into the wants of applicants before he relieved them ; and I can truly affirm, that I never yet saw a case of real distress turned away by him without some consolatory act of kindness. In the country, also, he endeavoured to suit the assistance he gave the poor to their peculiar circumstances, with which he was inti-



mately acquainted, and devised all sorts of plans, in seasons of unusual suffering, to extend a continuance of the charity required during the time it was most needed. It has been well observed to me, in a kind communication in reference to this work,<sup>3</sup> "So many eccentric, ludicrous, and extravagant things have been circulated of Mr. Hill in relation to his charitable deeds, as though he were open to imposition from the frail benevolence of his heart, that it ought to be known that good sense, shrewd discernment, and sound experience, were united in the exercise of that large philanthropy, by which he was pre-eminently distinguished in life and death." To do justice to the memory of my beloved guardian, as respects his private intercourse with his people, and the wisdom and benevolence of his heart, has been my object in this brief chapter, from which, I trust, it has appeared, that he was not allured by a flattering popularity into forgetfulness of the silent and unseen virtues of a life, both in public and private, dedicated to God.

<sup>3</sup> By the Rev. George Clayton.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *Mr. Hill's presents for children.*

WHEN the increasing dimness of Mr. Rowland Hill's sight, from repeated attacks of inflammation, very much prevented his reading, he found a source of indoor amusement, in making some pretty and instructive presents for the children of his friends. These were boxes covered with coloured paper, and containing, in partitions, the letters of the alphabet, from which improving sentences and texts of scripture might be formed. In each box there were printed directions, in easy verse, to be learnt by the children, and a couplet in rhyme on every letter. In a morning before breakfast, Mr. Hill was to be seen hard at work on his newly invented playthings, cutting out the letters, which he had had printed on pasteboard for the purpose, with the greatest apparent earnestness. While at Bristol, in 1824, he gave a specimen of his invention to Mrs. Hannah More, who says, in her answer to the letter which accompanied it, "I admire the usefulness and the humility of all your baby manufactures. Your carefully sorted alphabets are like Ajax making bows and arrows for little children. Happy would it have been for certain heroes,

ancient and modern, who set the world in a flame, had their leisure been as innocently and usefully employed." When he sent his little present to this celebrated and excellent authoress, Mr. Hill indulged his humorous vein by imitating the style of Sternhold and Hopkins :

With this my love doth come to you ;  
My love it is both sure and true,  
And eke the same, likewise also,  
Unto your household it doth go.

It is pleasing to see the playful and lively spirit of these two useful and admirable persons; whose cheerfulness was the result of a life spent in cultivating the truest spirit of genuine christianity.

In December, 1824, Mrs. Hill had the courage, at her advanced age, to submit to a dangerous and painful operation, which she bore with amazing fortitude and patience. Her recovery was rapid, even beyond the expectations of the eminent and skilful surgeons who attended her,<sup>1</sup> and the effect produced on her mind, was an admirable proof of the depth and reality of the religion she professed. When Mr. Jones wrote from Wotton, to express his anxiety and that of the people for her restoration, she added the following postscript to Mr. Hill's reply. " I cannot let this go without trying to send you a line or two (it is my first attempt at letter-writing since my illness), to thank you for your very kind letter. The contents of it drew a pleasant tear from my eye, as having a hope your requests would be heard on my behalf. I am afraid to say so, but I think, in some measure, I desire purification of soul, may be the blessing I may gain from the trial I have had. My mind has been

<sup>9</sup> Sir William Blizard and Mr. English.

calm during the confinement of a sick room ; and at the time of operation, I trust I was enabled to look to God for his support ; and I had a confidence that the prayers of the children of God would be heard, as I believe many felt and prayed for me." In a letter to her friend, Mrs. Edward Walker, her feelings under the severe trial are further expressed by Mrs. Hill : " I have been writing to you several times in my own mind, but now I will try to bring it into effect, as I am persuaded you will be glad to receive a few lines from me. I must not write much, as I find neither my head nor arm can yet bear much use. Through the mercy of God I am as well, nay, better than could be expected ; but being of a nervous habit, I feel now, in that respect, from the shock of a severe operation. But O, what cause have I to be very thankful for the support, I trust I was favoured with in a time of need, and I hope it is my desire (but we know not ourselves) that the affliction may not wear away without a real blessing to my soul. My five weeks' retirement has been a time of consideration and examination. I cannot look back on *a well-spent life*, but, on the contrary, I find much, very much, to mourn over ; yet I hope it has, in some measure, been a season of prayer and praise, and that I would not have been without the affliction ; but we are not good judges of ourselves whilst under the rod. We are deceitful creatures ; may the Lord make us sincere in every point of view. And now, my dear friend, accept my thanks for your kind anxiety about me ; friendship is soothing as we pass through this vale of trouble and sorrow."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Rowland Hill commenced every successive year of their lives with an increasingly ear-

nest desire to be found in the service of God. Mr. Hill's prayer was, that he might work to the very last, and that he might see perpetual fruits of his exertions. "To preach and not to do good by it," he observed to a friend, "is one of the greatest trials I know; but the Lord's work can only be done by the Lord himself." In the year 1825 he went through his usual routine in London, and took a journey into the West of England, actuated by the purest desire to be useful. He sometimes exclaimed, "Lord, help me to do a little more good before I die, and raise up young ministers, who shall work from the bottom of their hearts. These last are what I find it difficult to meet with." He was also fond of applying to himself a quotation from one of his own hymns:

My dear Redeemer and my God,  
Take thou the purchase of thy blood;  
The price was paid, that I might be  
A living sacrifice to thee.

Mr. Rowland Hill's devotion to the cause of religion was accompanied with the most genuine humility; he felt, to use his own expression, "that no success could be the result, without a divine influence from above," and that he had "reason to blush that God could and did bless so feeble an instrument for such a glorious purpose." In one of his journies in 1825, he attacked the errors of Socinians in no very gentle terms, some of whom observed, rather sneeringly, "poor old gentleman, it is a pity he does not leave off." This came to his ears; and after a very animated address on a public occasion, he suddenly said, in his own inimitable manner, after explaining the cause of the remark, "*the poor old gentleman will never leave off*, till the power to refute errors and spread the

truth leaves off him, so further kind advice on this subject will only be thrown away."

In the spring of 1826, on arriving in town, I found Mr. Rowland Hill was preaching in Kent, and a few days after I reached his house, he returned, full of life and animation from his journey. The same course of activity in London, and the same diligence in the country, marked the progress of this venerable individual during the whole of the year. He made an autumnal journey into Devonshire, preaching daily, and in a letter dated Exmouth, August 25th, 1826, he observes—"I have now entered the 83rd year of my life; I ought to be much more ripe than I am. I wish, by a wise conduct, as long as strength lasts, to do good without doing harm. My course is nearly finished—O that I may finish it with joy!"

In the beginning of January, 1827, Mrs. Hill wrote me word—"Mr. Hill is still able to preach twice on a Sunday, though he says, in the evening of the day, 'I am very tired;' but he is thought the wonder of the age, to do what he does at *eighty-two*." One of the most remarkable things about him at this time was, that his voice did not fail, and that he was able to command the earnest attention of his immense congregation, and to speak so as to be heard by them all. His chief trial was a cough, which came on in the spring, but which, while it affected his comfort in the delivery of his sermons, was not considered at all detrimental to his constitution, as he was relieved by considerable expectoration. At this advanced period of his life, Mr. Hill's mind seemed, 'instead of losing its powers, only to be more and more matured; and his vivid, and, in former years, uncontrolled imagination, did not take less lofty flights, but gathered, in

the wide range of its excursions, only heavenly fruits. The ludicrous was banished from his sermons, and his aspect and language wore all the solemn dignity of age; his manner too, was that of one who recollected, that he must soon himself realize the importance of the truths he had, for more than half a century, been charging home upon a thoughtless and a sinful world. Whenever I happened occasionally to hear him, I was greatly struck with the increasing richness and method of his sermons; and on my remarking the latter to him, he said, "I used to ramble a little, I know, but I believe I do stick to my text in my old age." I never shall forget the power with which he preached about this time, on the words, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, enlarging on the necessity of a *personally* felt and acknowledged interest in Christ. "The older I grow," he said, "the more I feel my need of the Saviour, and the only evidence I have of my interest in him, is the life-giving influence of a living Redeemer on my heart—we know that we are his, by the spirit which he hath given us. O fine expression!—because *I live, ye shall live also*—if Jesus lives in your hearts by faith, then, and then only, can you say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*. This language belongs only to those who are dead *indeed unto sin, but alive unto God* through Jesus Christ, their living and life-giving Lord."

To be useful, either directly or indirectly, was, during his whole life, the happy lot of Mr. Rowland Hill; but about the time to which our attention has been called in this chapter, he was destined to be the means of good, in a way he could never have anticipated. Miss Sheppard, a young lady residing at the well known and beautiful place belonging to her



family, called the Ridge, near Uley, Gloucestershire, offered to take his likeness, with the benevolent view of building an infant school, from the profits of the sale of a print to be engraved from her painting. In this object she succeeded, in a way equally creditable to her talents and her kind disposition. An interesting correspondence took place on the proposed design, and the letters of Mr. Rowland Hill have been very obligingly lent me for insertion in this work. The first is a note expressing his opinion of the likeness.

DEAR MADAM,

It certainly must be the universal opinion, that you have *hit me off* very correctly. As soon as it may be convenient to yourself, on Monday morning next, we shall be happy to see you. We, through the mercy of God, are returned in good health from our western tour. We hope you are all well at the Ridge.

Yours, sincerely,

ROWLAND HILL.

*Wotton, Monday evening.*

Miss Sheppard, in order to secure more effectually the success of her plan, requested Mr. Hill to promote the sale of the engraving, to which he replied as follows:

*London, October 26th, 1826.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

To oblige kind friends is at all times a grateful task, but a difficulty is thrown in the way to know how to perform it, as it relates to your present request. Had you sat before a glass and taken your

own likeness as completely as you have taken mine, I could have said more respecting an excellent female artist, than I can say when I have to sell a representation of myself. Perhaps, however, Mrs. Hill may, in a few instances, do what I cannot. But a further difficulty will be found among most of her expected customers: she will have to treat with those who have shallow pockets and short purses, and who generally complain of want of money for more important purposes, while the pressure of the times most grievously augments the complaint. However, something I hope we may be able to accomplish, and if the print proves as good as the painting, I should hope the effort may be made with some little success.

Mrs. Hill feels herself much obliged to Mrs. Sheppard, for her kind attention in seeking out for a servant for her.

\* \* \* \* \*

How different the servitude of those that wait upon each other, when compared to the servitude of those who wait upon the Lord. All his commands are for our own interest and good, and the more we serve him, the better we like it. How different the service of the slaves of sin—how disgraceful their occupation, how badly paid! With us it is good wages, good work, good food, good raiment; while there is provided for all of them a building, a glorious building, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

With kind remembrances to all the family, believe me to be,

Most sincerely yours,  
ROWLAND HILL.

Miss Sheppard,  
The Ridge, Uley, Gloucestershire.

In this, and in two other letters on the same subject, it will be seen that Mr. Hill never forgot to add, to his observations on the concerns of time, sentiments that might elevate the mind to objects of eternal interest. The next letter is a beautiful instance of this habit.

*London, March 20th, 1827.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I have not sufficient vanity to suppose, that the very correct and well-executed representation of my old *phiz*, would have had such a run among some of the higher ranks, but out of admiration of the female artist, who can imitate life and mind after such an inimitable style. Though I have not sufficient vanity to hang up myself in my own house, yet I must contrive somehow so to exhibit myself, that, if possible, I may pick up some customers for the accomplishment of your kind design. [Still] I cannot form for myself any sanguine hopes of considerable success, as those with whom I am called to labour are found to be among the poorer, or at least the middling classes of mankind, and these find it necessary to seek after cheap bargains, especially in the purchase of such things as are not among the more useful and necessary commodities of life. However, when the print is published, I shall make the trial.

\* \* \* \* \*

Still, dear madam, if you can represent life, it is beyond your power to communicate it. Christ alone is the life, and a giver of a most glorious life to all those who are born from above. He not only correctly depicts his image upon the regenerate heart, but puts his own life upon every feature he creates within.

This is a religion that never could have been contrived by the art of man, as it can only be accomplished by the power of God. All other evidences of the truth of christianity seem to sink into nothing when compared to this—the inspiration of the living mind and soul of Christ by that faith which works by love, and makes us all one with him. Without this life, whatever our profession may be, we are still dead before him—dead in trespasses and sins. O what a brilliant passage is that—“*Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God: when, therefore, Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.*” Yes, it is *Christ within us* that is the hope of glory, communicating the divinest realities to the heart, and is nothing less than an infusion of heaven itself, through all the faculties of the soul, and establishing that kingdom there, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

With very kind regards to all your large family, believe me to be

Theirs and yours very sincerely,

ROWLAND HILL.

The last letter to Miss Sheppard, on the subject of the print, contains a beautiful allusion to the image of Christ on the soul of the believer.

*Surry chapel, May 7th, 1827.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I am quite offended at myself, for not having attended to your letter and Mr. Sheppard's before now; but the truth is, I have been glad to make a short elopement from town, to get out of a perpetual bustle. And now I am returned, I find the bustle worse than

ever ; while a variety of public meetings and institutions demand much more of my attention than my increasing lassitude, through age, will enable me to bestow upon them.

During this last winter, a print has been in circulation, which has met with so large a share of the public approbation, that I fear the print recently published by you will meet with a dull sale, at least in this metropolis.

\* \* \* \* \*

However, we must do our best, while my subscription to your infant school shall not be lessened ; though I find the more general preference given to the other print stands much in my way in my efforts to promote the sale of yours : and, unfortunately, that print stands exhibited for sale at a print shop nearly opposite the chapel. However, if we cannot do what we would, we must be contented to do what we can, while the same objection that exists in London may not be the case elsewhere.

Above all things, we should look for that correct pencil, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, that can depict, if I may so speak, with so much wisdom and power, the sacred image of Jesus Christ on the regenerate heart. By him alone the restoration of the divine likeness, which is the beauty of holiness, can be restored to the heart, bringing with it the only evidence whereby we know that we are born from above, born of the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever.

What a blessing, when such a divine spirit runs through the branches of a large family, inspiring us with that wisdom of holiness, that so powerfully and wisely regulates all our footsteps through life, and

ultimately lands us safely and honourably in the kingdom of everlasting joy, there to see as we are seen, and know as we are known, and there to be eternally with the Lord.

With kind regards to all the family, I remain,

Yours very truly and sincerely,

ROWLAND HILL.

The praiseworthy exertions and talents of Miss Sheppard produced a sufficient profit, from the sale of the portrait of Mr. Hill, to enable her to lay the foundation-stone of a spacious room at Uley, in the autumn of 1827, which was opened in the spring of 1828. The school consists of about one hundred and sixty infants and fifty girls; the building is also used as a Sunday school for three hundred children. The art of painting has never been consecrated to a more truly christian purpose; and happy are they who possess the will to devote, in like manner, to the glory of God, the gifts he has in his providence bestowed on them.

Though occasionally complaining, "I begin to get old," Mr. Rowland Hill made arrangements, early in the year 1827, for a preaching ramble in South Wales. When excited by the impulse of the moment, he shook off the remembrance of his old age; and, when planning his journey for this year, he said to a respectable Welsh minister, who was requested to reside in London some of the summer months—"Being a *very young man*, I will be one of your supplies during part of your absence." Indeed, but for the judicious interference of Mrs. Hill, he would constantly have undertaken more than his physical powers would have allowed him to go through. The ardour of his mind

was undiminished, and his zealous desire to win souls to Christ evidently increased as he approached the period when he trusted, through faith and patience, to meet his Redeemer in glory. When alluding to this hope, he said—"But if I would reign *with* Christ hereafter, he must reign *in* me here, and that without a rival." A rich vein of spirituality ran, as Mr. Hill advanced in years, through his general conversation, and he seemed daily to ripen for heaven, and to long, with unutterable earnestness, for a deeper and deeper sense of the Lord's presence in his soul. His was an entire dedication to God, which became, under the divine blessing, the spring of almost unexampled usefulness, and was the secret of that attraction which drew around him cordial admirers of every denomination forgetful, in contemplating the energy of one who *knew nothing among them, but Christ and him crucified*, of the minor differences which divide those who are passing as pilgrims through the wilderness to an eternal home of union and love.

During the year 1827, though gradually yielding to some of the infirmities of old age, which crept on him by degrees, Mr. Hill pursued a course of astonishing activity. He visited Brighton, and parts of Kent and Sussex, in the spring; and, after the accustomed fatigues of London, went on his proposed preaching excursion in South Wales. There, inspired by scenes of nature's loveliness, and by the cordiality of those who surrounded him, he appeared to forget the weight of years, and the incumbrance of his aged frame. He both caught and imparted warmth wherever he went amongst that animated people, and generally returned from his visits to the principality, refreshed both in body and mind.



At the great age to which Mr. Hill had arrived, it was not at all a matter of surprise, that now and then, before he entered the pulpit, he should express a fear, lest increasing lassitude should cause him to preach with impaired force and effect; but the wonder was, that as soon as he began to address the people, this apprehension was entirely forgotten. Somebody would, perhaps, say to him—"Well, sir, notwithstanding your complaint of weakness, do you know how long you preached this morning?"—"Perhaps half an hour, or a little more."—"Why, sir, you were more than an hour in your sermon." He then used to look astonished, and say—"Well, I am sure I had not an idea of it—it was too long for me, and too long for the people—but when I am once set a-going I cannot stop: I must be shorter though." Sometimes, when conscious that he had spoken at an unusual length, he said—"Time and strength too forbid my adding more; but O bear with me, while I speak to you of these things, for I shall not live much longer, and you will soon hear my voice no more." An allusion to his removal seldom failed to bring tears into the eyes of his people, who were constantly saying, when they looked on his hoary hairs and aged face—"The Lord spare him to us a few years more—what shall we do when he is gone!" For several years before his death he was often contemplating it as near at hand. In a letter to a friend, in the autumn of 1827, he says—"I am sorry to hear you complain of health: we must all have something to bring us to the grave. Before that time comes, O that we may be brought nearer to God! No wonder that I, at my time of life, have admonitions in plenty, that the time of my departure is near at hand. O for grace to be ripe for glory!"

The feeling which marked every successive year of Mr. Rowland Hill's decline, is expressed in a couplet, written in the first leaf of his memoranda of engagements for 1828:

Dearest Saviour, let me give,  
All I have, and am to Thee.

By reference to his Almanack, it appears that in accordance with this prayer, nearly every day was indeed consecrated to his Redeemer's service. Being entirely free from care and anxiety of a worldly nature, he had nothing but the weakness arising from his great age, in the way of his holy pursuits. Indeed, a special blessing seemed to rest upon all his temporal affairs, and upon his family; and the affectionate attentions of Lord Hill, now resident in London as commander of the forces, added exceedingly to the comfort and happiness of the evening of his days. Time had also supplied, with new members equally dear to him, the places of those friends of his congregation whom he had seen pass away, and they seemed to vie with each other in respect for his character and attention to his comfort. Amongst these there was no one to whom he professed a more cordial attachment, than the well-known and generous Mr. Broadley Wilson, of Clapham; of whom he used to say—"I have but one thing to desire—that he may be kept out of heaven a good long time, he is so much wanted on earth." In a letter on business to this gentleman, dated Wotton, August 4th, 1828, Mr. Hill thus assures him of his sincere and well merited friendship—"This, however, [gives me] an opportunity of expressing to you my sentiments of high regard and esteem, whose favour and attention are so highly regarded by me. How different are those feelings of affection, which

are created among those who are one in Christ, to those common ties of affection which are found among the people of the world, while only swayed by worldly motives between each other, to manifest their little love of that sort among themselves. O that more of this were manifested in the church of Christ at large, that the old proverb may be effectually revived—‘see how these Christians love.’ *God is love, and love is the fulfilling of the law.*”

“A short time since, I was invited to Cheltenham; collections are wanted there a little more than formerly. The people were astonishingly attentive, and crowded the chapel. Mr. Close<sup>2</sup> is truly faithful, and does an abundance of good, while his unreserved and frank behaviour endears him to all who know him. I was astonished when there, to see in that place of dissipation, the decent and orderly appearance which is exhibited on the sabbath day; the churches, if not all other places, are crowded, while not a shop is open all the town over. One thing, however, was wanting; *you were not there*, nor can I be *here* long. Can an old man, just eighty-four, wonder that his strength decays, and that I cannot do the things I yet would; still I trust I feel the desire to do all I can, but how poorly done! *God, be merciful to me a sinner.*”

Sentiments such as are contained in this letter, were the genuine feelings of Mr. Hill's mind, arising from true humility of heart before God, and a consciousness that the best of men must acknowledge themselves to have been unprofitable servants. In his latter days, this lowly sense of himself never destroyed his general cheerfulness before the world, which he not

<sup>2</sup> The active and much respected perpetual curate of Cheltenham.

only enjoyed himself, but largely diffused; imparting to others a portion of his buoyant and animated spirits. This caused him to be received with smiles wherever he appeared; and when he attended the public meetings in London, he was instantly surrounded by a host of friends pressing forward to greet him, or to hand him from his carriage and assist him to the platform. On these days, all seemed pleasure and enjoyment, save now and then to his worthy and honest coachman, who was occasionally gazed at by people whispering—"look, look, there is Rowland Hill's carriage, and that is the highwayman he made his servant." When told of this, his master used to laugh and say—"what *swallows* people must have, to credit such stories!" The truth was, Mr. Rowland Hill was singularly fortunate in having the comfort, in his latter years, of attached, faithful, and upright servants, who seemed to regard his interests as though they were their own.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *Prophecy.*

I HAVE before stated, that during the whole of his long and active life, Mr. Rowland Hill never altered his views of doctrine, in any essential particular. It was therefore to be expected, that in common with the majority of sound and experienced divines, he should look with serious apprehension on the crude speculations, wild theories, and visionary interpretations of prophecy, which a few years ago glared forth suddenly on the christian world, and seemed almost to extinguish for a time, the gentler effulgence of long received truth. Too many appeared to forget, that the bible is not only a guide to man, but the sacred and mysterious book of God; and that while the light to lead believers is diffused, like the beams of a sun, over the entire surface of the new creation, Jehovah's unapproachable eternal throne is shrouded by clouds and darkness, indicating his presence, but impenetrable by mortal eye. When it pleases the incomprehensible author of truth, to unravel his own enigmas, the divine prescience is acknowledged and adored; but it is the province of Him, who gathered the darkness visible around himself, to chase away its

shades, and to open at his own time, and in his own way, the seals of prophecy. Wisely indeed hath the Father kept the times and the seasons in his own power; but to shew the omniscience of infinity, he has recorded the divine purposes in words unintelligible, till explained by their accomplishment, when it is clearly made manifest, that all the complicated movements of time, have been regulated by the foreknowledge and wisdom of God, to exhibit which, he has recorded them in the written volume of his unfathomable decrees. Every riddle of earthly invention may be successfully investigated by the ingenuity of man; but God alone can solve the dark problems of his all-wise designs, the obscurity of which, till fully made known, and plainness when perfectly disclosed, prove at once the boundlessness of divine, and the finiteness of human intelligence. This view of the contents of the sacred pages, seems to me to convey to the mind an indelible conviction of the *impossibility*, that they could have been the invention of a creature, and ought to have its due weight with those who do not yet know, by the unction of the holy one, the truth of the deep things of God, and who have no *witness in themselves* that they have Christ, the sum and substance of the scriptures, *within* them, as the hope of glory.

I might also observe, that many of the later productions on prophecy, have not even the charm of novelty to recommend them; nor is it at all a new device of the author of error, to attempt to draw us away from the cross of Christ, by splendid anticipations of the speedy visible erection of his throne on earth. The dangers with which such speculations were fraught, presented themselves at a glance to the mind of Mr. Rowland Hill, and I trust the re-

marks of so aged, experienced, and consistent a christian minister, will be received with attention, and become useful to many who have been too prone to form sudden and mistaken opinions. He wrote me a long letter on the subject, in which he says, "all divine truths,<sup>1</sup> among such as are led by the spirit of truth, are at once instinctively admitted *without controversy*; but yet such as suppose they take the Bible for their guide, are too frequently misguided by their own imaginations. There is a deep and safe passage between *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, and none but rash and wanton seamen are in danger while they pass. Mr. Ward, of Iver, has pleased me hugely, by erecting a needed light-house for some of the present day. They who presume to prophesy upon prophecy, have, in my humble opinion, ventured upon very dangerous ground. It appears to me most evident, that prophesy is not to be fully understood till after its accomplishment. How mysterious were all those prophecies respecting the kingdom and coming of our Lord, and even to the disciples themselves, till after the day of Pentecost; and afterwards, how plain and lucid are they made to appear. But some fertile imaginations think they have discovered, not only when the millennial glories are to appear, but seem to have depicted upon their imaginations, all the pomp and visible splendour of the personal coming of the Lord Jesus upon the earth; and in my opinion also, [in a manner] ill suited to that spiritual reign, which some spiritual minds would rather wish to expect.

"It is my opinion, that Mr. Ward's paper contains such wise and needed remarks in the present day, as

<sup>2</sup> He meant of course such as are really necessary to salvation.



may well deserve our most serious consideration. Is it true, that a man so lovely as —, and in other respects so wise and good, is among the number of those who are in the pursuit of such hazardous speculations? [This is not to be] wondered at, in one possessed of such a wild and staring imagination as seems to envelope the mind of —, or the whimsical mind of young —; but that others of a more solid understanding, should prefer to have such windmills whisking about their heads, is strange indeed. If I had not conceived that there might be a dangerous tendency in these speculations, I should feel less concerned; but it is to be feared, after they have been misguided in their speculations and calculations on revelation, they may give up revelation altogether. We cannot sink too low in humility, nor yet rise too high in heavenly-mindedness, but we may soon be lost in the wilderness of needless speculations. Such as are sober-minded will keep within their depth, and when the Lord directs us to launch forth, we may do it with safety. If we are wise according as it is written, we shall be profitably wise; but if we want to be wise beyond what is written, we shall smart for our folly."

The year 1828 passed away without any particular event affecting Mr. Rowland Hill. In the autumn, Mrs. Hill said of him, in a letter to me—"he is just gone to Bath, to preach for one Sunday; from thence he will return here (Wotton), and visit Bristol for three Sundays, and return to town after the second Sunday in November. He appears as well in health as usual, particularly while preaching." At Bath, he usually preached in the chapel of his friend Mr. Jay, an individual whose piety, preaching abilities, and re-

ligious writings, are well known to the public. He for many years filled the place of Mr. Hill, at Surry chapel, during part of the time of his absence, much to the satisfaction of the people who attended him. With minds very differently constituted, and of altogether opposite habits, these two devoted ministers sustained a long friendship in the most perfect harmony, constrained towards each other by the common love of their Saviour. Mr. Hill, when speaking of the easy flow of Mr. Jay's well arranged discourses, used to say, "he blows the silver trumpet," and frequently commended his ever increasing spirituality in preaching, and the unspotted consistency of his life.

Mr. Rowland Hill, during his absence from London this year, spent four Sundays at Cheltenham, where prodigious crowds thronged the place in which he preached. It was remarked, that he had never been heard to declare the gospel of salvation with greater solemnity and power, than on these occasions. His sermons were enriched with all the maturity of age, combined with the vigour of middle life, to which was added the affecting consideration, that he should probably never again proclaim the tidings of redeeming love, in that place of fashionable resort. He said in his droll way, "I am going to Cheltenham; I will try and be upon my P's and Q's;" and indeed he did, by all accounts, seem carefully to watch and weigh every expression that fell from his lips. He came home much refreshed by his visit there, and full of commendation of the zeal and activity of the clergy, whose labours he had witnessed. He said to me, "I love to go to church at Cheltenham, and I went whenever I could, all the while I was there." His often repeated prayer at this time was—"O that we may

feel more of the divine life in our own souls when preaching the word of life to others." He remarked also in a letter to me—"Nothing can be effectually done in the ministration of the word of life, but by the Holy Spirit. While some explain away this glorious truth to mean nothing, or next to nothing, and others caricature the same by mad and enthusiastic reveries, it is still nothing less than the wisdom which is from above, which converts fools because of transgression, and makes them wise for their everlasting good." "Preaching," he frequently observed, "is poor dead work, unless we are under the life-giving influence of the Holy Ghost—O to feel the *power*—the life of religion—it is not an imaginary thing—it is a divine reality." "A Christian," he said one day, after sitting for some time absorbed in reflection, "is one (O what a mystery) who has God the Holy Spirit, in his soul—a temple of the living God—cleanse me, O Lord, that thou mayest dwell in my heart. What slight conceptions have those of the sublime and glorious work of divine grace, who fritter religion away into a little scrap of morality." Now and then, after a long silence he exclaimed, "my petition is—Lord, teach me to hate sin more and more;" and I remember once in a sermon, he raised his voice, and in a most emphatic and dignified manner asked the congregation—"what say you to this prayer—*Lord, let us rather die than sin!*"

In a letter to me, dated January 12th, 1829, after kindly observing—"You talked of a journey in the spring, and that then you should again see London, which gives us a hope that we shall then again see you and yours," he adds, "Considering that we are both such very old pilgrims, almost at our journey's end, we ought to be very thankful we are as we are,

continued in health. O to bring forth fruit in old age!" His frame of mind at this time seemed peculiarly peaceful and happy, and he wrote in his memorandum book, as one rejoicing in this blessing—

Hail! lovely Peace, with balmy wings,

'T is the sweet boon the Spirit brings,

And I recollect his frequently saying—"What a glorious promise—*The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" The spring of this year was marked by no particular incident in the career of Mr. Rowland Hill, and he went to Wotton as usual, after the period of the meetings in London. In August I paid him a visit in Gloucestershire. On the arrival of Mrs. Sidney and myself at Wotton, we found him from home, but Mrs. Hill expected him in a few days, from a journey he had taken into Devonshire. At Devonport he had been followed by an immense throng of hearers, who were impressed with a mournful foreboding that it would be his last visit. His residence there was made very agreeable to him, by the great kindness and attention of Lord and Lady Northesk, as well as by the civilities of all with whom he came in contact, and he returned home with many pleasing recollections of his tour. As soon as his voice was heard in the house, kindly asking after his people, Mrs. Hill said—"Now you shall take him by surprise"—and I never shall forget the kindness, the cordiality, the animation of his welcome. We inquired about his journey, and he spoke of the civilities he had received, the numbers who had heard him, and the support he had met with in his labours, but added—"When some people came and told me, with tears of joy, that they were awakened under my preaching many years ago,

when I was in those parts, it was almost more than the old man could bear." He generally, when his feelings overcame him, relieved his mind by changing the subject, and, turning to me, he said—"Sidney, I hope you are going to preach in the church here to-morrow." I answered, that the clergyman had invited me to do so in the afternoon, and that I was to read prayers in the morning. "That 's right," he replied, "we will shut up our place." Accordingly I found, on returning to his house after the morning service, that he had said at the conclusion of his sermon—"My relation, Mr. Sidney, will preach at the church this afternoon, so this place will be closed, that you may all go." Obedient to his wishes, the people went, and the fine old church was, in consequence, crowded to excess.

On this sabbath Mr. Hill entered his eighty-fifth year, and under a solemn impression that it would be his last birth-day, selected for the evening text—*Death is swallowed up in victory*. His countenance was unusually pale, but exceedingly expressive of the train of serious and devout ideas that was passing through his mind, and of the awe with which he contemplated the near approach of the day when his account must be rendered up to God. His calm but lofty tone bespoke the holy repose of his own bosom. It was like the half-hour before sun-set, in the midst of nature's most majestic scenery, when there is not a breath to agitate the frailest leaf, or ripple the glassy smoothness of the water's surface—it was the sublime of tranquillity. Death appeared awful, and judgment appalling; but his soul was composed, in the hope that the destroyer had been deprived of his conquest, and the judge propitiated, through faith in the atoning virtue

of an all-sufficient sacrifice. This earth presents not a spectacle of equal grandeur to that of a christian, who has power to wrest the dart of the king of terrors from his hand, on the very confines of the eternal world, and who exults in the triumph of being made more than conqueror, not by his own strength, but through him who has loved him, and redeemed him by his blood. True grace ennobles and dignifies the soul, because the paltry thing *self* is cast into the dust, and the glory of the victory ascribed to him alone, who sitteth on the throne till all his foes be made his footstool. Mr. Rowland Hill was happily enabled thus to exult in the contemplation of his death, for to him it was in reality deprived of its alarms. He shed no tear on this birth-day, but the people shed many: and one poor man, devoted to his ministry, said to me—"Sir, I cannot bear the thought of losing him—I wish we could *put him back* about forty years!" But the finger on the dial-plate of human life is capable of no retrograde motion, and blessed are they who, like my venerable relative, watch its onward course with a serene and heavenly peace, as it approximates towards the completion of its circle. Genuine faith is always unmingled with presumption; and this was eminently the character of the blessed hope in the breast of Mr. Rowland Hill, who trembled when he looked on his human infirmities; but when he could *look off*<sup>2</sup> from the creature, upon him, who having begun a good work in us, will complete it unto the end, he was enabled to rejoice in the prospect of death, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

<sup>2</sup> I recollect hearing a clergyman, equally distinguished for learning and piety, say—"No expression in the New Testament comforts me like the word ἀπορῶντες, *looking off* self unto Christ."

During our stay at Wotton, a Church Missionary meeting was held at Uley, and Mr. Hill determined to attend it, that he might express his interest in the prosperity of the cause. Speaking to me of the London Missionary Society, he said, in a jocular way—"You churchmen have left *our* society in the lurch, but I shall go for all that." When we had descended into the lovely vale of Uley, we arrived at the door of a neat, plain, and commodious building, and the coachman, by whom I was sitting on the box of Mr. Hill's carriage, observed to me—"Sir, this is the school-room that was built out of the sale of my master's picture." On entering the room, I perceived at the end opposite the temporary platform, an engraving of Mr. Hill, framed and glazed, a delightful testimony to the usefulness both of the artist, and the subject on which she had so happily and successfully exercised her skill. When Mr. Hill rose to speak, the most profound interest was immediately manifested, and he addressed the persons present like an aged patriarch, the days of whose pilgrimage were nearly ended. He was, he said, connected with another society, in whose successes he was sure every one who heard him truly rejoiced, but he did not less, on that account, delight to join the exemplary individuals around him. "I love," he added, "to see the zeal which now animates the exertions of the vigilant ministers of the church; and O let an old man, just dropping into the grave, give you his blessing, and urge you to abound in the work of the Lord, while you have youth and strength to labour." He afterwards dined with a neighbouring clergyman, and was as full of anecdote and life as I ever remember to have seen him.



Mr. Rowland Hill concluded the year 1829 with fewer sufferings, from the feebleness of age, than were even indicated by his appearance, but he complained of much inconvenience from dimness of sight. Early in 1830, I received a letter from him written with an almost youthful vivacity.

*Surry chapel, February 16th, 1830.*

DEAR SIDNEY,

Though I have taken up my pen to write, yet the day is so dark through fog, and my eyes so dim through age, that I can scarcely see what I write. No wonder at my time of life, through the severity of the season, I have been nearly kept a prisoner at home almost ever since my arrival in town for the winter. My old wife came to town with a bad cold, but is now much better, but while this weather lasts, keeps within doors, by way of prevention. So much for ourselves. And what shall I say next—for I feel so dull and stupid, that I scarcely know what to say? O yes! this thought just now bites me—*A few thoughts for a young minister.* One embittered anonymous publisher says—"I look upon myself to be as great a man as the apostle Paul." Well, that is pride with a witness!—for I really think, taking him as a whole, a greater man never lived, since his days to the present day. Yet I think both you and I may be humble imitators of that which we can never reach. First, I would wish to imitate his style. O the vanity of the old man, to try to get up to the style of St. Paul! Stop a little before you bestow your censure—I never thought of getting *up* to his style, but still I will aim at it, by the blessing of God, by getting *down* to his style. Only read him from 1 Cor. i, 17, and through-

out all the second chapter, and then ask who is likely to do the most good to the living church of Christ? Those egregious doctors of the sounding brass tribe, may blow away with turgid trumpery, and swell away till they burst with pride, and the tinkling cymbal *fid-fad* musicians, may try to tickle the fancy of such half-witted admirers as mistake *sound* for *sense*. But still how different that wise, that dignified simplicity of speech the apostle used, when he preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which so effectually wrought on the heart of all them who believed: and though we should prove ourselves proud indeed, if we should ever fancy that we could reach a style like this, yet to aim at such a model will still be our highest wisdom, and this we shall never reach in any measure, but as blest with that wisdom and spiritual understanding which is entirely from above.

I [was] reminded of this, since indisposition has prevented my going through the whole of the services on the sabbath-day, when I heard one of the auxiliaries exhibit too much in the *Rev. Mr. Tinkler's* style. O how disgusting to see a man in the garb of a minister, transmogrified at least half way towards a monkey, by his own silly pride and self-conceit! O how I wish and pray for that man, in my fast declining days, whose wisdom and spirituality, whose simplicity and godly sincerity, and [heart] fired with a seraph's zeal, might [enable him to] spring upon the prey, and carry all before him. How glad should I be

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[of such a one] from some of your clerical tribe, who in the fulness of his holy zeal, pants for a little more liberty than the church allows.

\* \* \* \* \*

But O for more of the outpouring of the spirit of Christ among us ! But as Mrs. H. has somewhat to add . . . . . with hearty love to you both, believe me to be,

Yours most affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

This letter was written under the disadvantages mentioned in it, which caused the omissions I have endeavoured to supply. Indeed Mr. Rowland Hill's eyesight was becoming very indistinct, and he was for nearly two years before his death, obliged to dictate to an amanuensis, which he did with an ease and fluency truly surprising at his age. His infirmities at this time were not allowed to be any plea for repose. Mrs. Hill, in a letter to me, dated April 30th, 1830, says—"Mr. Hill, notwithstanding a very bad cold, started yesterday for a fortnight's tour in Kent," and he appeared much better for the journey on his return, though he had been very active in preaching. When I arrived in London in May, I had the happiness to find him wonderfully well in health, and as full of holy zeal as ever. On the anniversary of the Bible Society, he said to me at breakfast—"Sidney, are you going to the bible meeting to-day—because I mean to go—I wish to be there once more?" Somebody suggested that the fatigue might be too much for him, when he laughed, and said—"I tell you what, I will go, so there is an end of it: ring the bell, and tell them to get the carriage ready directly." We arrived late; the great room in Freemasons' hall was full, and a speaker was addressing the assembly. Mr. Hill entered with a firm step, requiring no other assistance but my arm; and the instantaneous bursts of ap-

plause that succeeded the announcement of his name, and continued even after he had reached the platform, seemed almost to overpower him. He was called on to move the thanks of the meeting to the vice-presidents, and rose amidst reiterated plaudits, with a dignity of manner well suited to his age and character. He was much embarrassed when he commenced, but soon rallied, to pay a well-merited compliment to the excellent prelates who were among the subjects of his motion, and to the scriptural tone of the service of the church. At length he recovered altogether, and with a look of humour, which soon communicated its influence to his hearers, he drew up, and said—"I once did, indeed, hear of a clergyman who *made an apology* for being at a Bible Society. An apology for being at a Bible Society! Well, then, he should make an apology for reading the liturgy, which is so full of the Bible; he should make an apology for reading the Psalms; and then he should make an apology for reading the first and second lessons. Next, he should make an apology for reading the ten commandments, and another for reading the epistles and gospels. In short, if he did his duty, he would have a great many too many apologies to make, for a great part of his duty is to read the Bible. I therefore conceive that our venerable prelates do themselves great honour by attending here to-day, since they preside over a church which has so much of the Bible in its public service." To this he added much in a grave and solemn tone, praying that the bishops might long live to put their hands on those who should yearn over souls in the bowels of Jesus Christ, declaring that he should rejoice on his death-bed in the recollection, that one of his last speeches had been made in behalf of the Bible

Society, and concluding with his blessing. The effect of Mr. Hill's speech, heightened by his dignified and venerable appearance, was adverted to with real feeling by those who succeeded him. Amongst others who applauded him, I was particularly struck with the christian joy and admiration that beamed upon the countenance of Mr. Wilberforce, the expression of which, when lighted up, indicated a mind full of wisdom, generosity, and kindness. Mr. Hill remarked of him—"I do not know the good quality that dear man does not possess, and how such a multitude of excellencies could ever have been condensed into one human being, is to me the greatest miracle of nature I ever saw. I have known him many years, and never did I see in him one thing I did not love, and yet every time I see him, I think I find something in him to love more." Lord Teignmouth was prevented by illness from being present at this meeting, but he was sufficiently recovered to call on Mr. Rowland Hill about a fortnight after. I was present at the interview, and truly can I say, the whole heart of the president of the Bible Society appeared to be in that sacred cause. I remember an observation which he made—"O Mr. Hill, in a few years more, into what insignificance will the followers of this world's ambitious projects sink, compared with the true greatness of the simple servant of Christ, or missionary to the heathen, who, in defiance of all reproach, has spent his devoted life in spreading the gospel!" It was gratifying to see this venerable nobleman and the aged subject of this memoir, entering into a work so great and glorious, with an energy no earthly object could have inspired.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *Last illness of Mrs. Hill.*

THOUGH the severe operation to which Mrs. Rowland Hill submitted with so much fortitude was the means of preserving her life for several years, her frame never fully recovered the shock it received. During the spring of 1830, she often expressed a conviction that her earthly career was drawing to a close, a foreboding which was unhappily realized shortly after her departure from London. Her health suddenly gave way during the summer, and gradually declined to the day of her death. The last letter I ever received from her, and probably the last she ever dictated, is in the hand writing of Mr. Hill's confidential servant, Mr. Charles Goring. It is as follows:—

*Wotton, July 20th, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIDNEY,

Not knowing till now what my movements were likely to be, prevented my writing or allowing Charles to write to you before, according to your desire. I am sorry to acquaint you that my health is worse than when you left me in London. I have just been to Gloucester to consult Dr. Baron, who, from

my great age, is I believe doubtful of my restoration to health. I am, at present, no better for his advice, and am extremely weak, scarcely able to go up or down stairs. By the doctor's advice, I have relinquished all thoughts of going to the sea. He also says I must be kept as quiet as possible. May the Lord prepare me for his will, whether it be for life or death. I am glad to tell you Mr. Hill is as well as can be expected. With our united love to yourself and Mrs. Sidney, who I hope is much better,

I am, dear Sidney,

Yours affectionately,

M. HILL.

In the beginning of the month of August her illness became alarming, and the mournful tidings of her approaching dissolution were thus communicated to me by Mr. Rowland Hill.

*Wotton, August 12th, 1830.*

DEAR SIDNEY,

I am now passing through deep waters, and I feel myself almost overwhelmed by them. I fear the increasing debility, which of late has been making a rapid progress upon Mrs. Hill's constitution, will soon terminate in her dissolution; nor does the best human means, or medical aid, in the least avail. Considering her natural timidity, she is as calm as can be expected; but O the solemn stroke of death! The thoughts of such a separation sink my spirits exceedingly. I would still try to labour, but under such burdened spirits, how difficult the task! While the feelings of human nature cannot, and indeed should not altogether be resisted, yet still it is [our] duty to



say—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Love to you both, from

Yours very affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

P. S. Mrs. Hill is now so exceedingly weak, that no persons but her immediate attendants are permitted to see her. I mention this, as Charles has hinted your kind intention of giving us a visit, to take your leave of your departing friend. I almost fear that if you were to travel immediately, with all possible expedition, you would scarcely find her alive, while the result of such a visit would only give pain to her mind. In a great measure, her recollection seems nearly gone, through the weakness of her bodily frame.

The death of Mrs. Hill, which took place on the 17th of August, was borne by Mr. Rowland Hill with the truest christian resignation. A few days after the funeral, he wrote me a long and kind letter, which will give the best idea of the state of his mind under this afflicting bereavement.

*Wotton-under-edge, Aug. 27th, 1830.*

O MY DEAR SIDNEY,

My dear wife is gone, but just a step before me, into the world of spirits. Her decline, at the last, was very rapid. Though the innocent aberrations of her mind, during the last few days of her life, were somewhat painful, and drew many a tear from my eyes, yet, at collected intervals, she would be in a state of fervent ejaculatory prayer; and I am satisfied that they who die under the influences of the spirit of prayer, will awake up in the regions of eter-

nal praise. She is now deposited in the vault where your grandmother and your parents lie, and I, according to the regular course of nature, must very soon be added to their number. And, O that God would give the grace that we may so apply our hearts unto wisdom, that neither the splendor of any thing that is great, or the silly conceit of any thing that is good in us, may in any way withdraw our eyes from beholding ourselves as sinful dust and ashes. Every moment we are in danger, especially if we are admired by the half-professors of the day. What an important admonition—*love not the world*.

Though I am glad that I dissuaded you from your kind purpose of a journey to Wotton, to see Mrs. Hill before her departure, as it would have answered no end, yet you cannot but be assured at all times how happy I am to see you when in town. To that place of my winter's residence I suppose I must make another, and, most probably, my last effort to resort. I begin to feel for the future prosperity of the Surry chapel congregation exceedingly. I know that good ministers must be of God's own making and sending; and while my prayers are not wanting at a throne of grace, that the Lord would send us one after his own heart, to be my helpmate in my fast declining days, yet, hitherto, the blessing has been withheld. Though I have hitherto kept myself detached from all those little sectarian principles which so miserably divide the church, yet even that seems to operate against me. The dissenter, by the contracted discipline of the church, feels himself thrust at a distance, and consequently keeps his distance, while their mutual prejudices are augmented thereby. O when shall that happy day dawn upon us, when real christians

and christian ministers, of all denominations, shall come nearer to each other. In some parts, blessed be God, this has been in a measure accomplished. With us, I fear, the contrary is to be lamented. I once had several of the clergy of the establishment to lend me their friendly aid; this [not being the case now] the more pains me, as from an education bias, I should be happy to obtain the help from that quarter, I so deeply need; but such chapels must be given over to the church, or they are not assisted by it.

I bless God my dear Sidney is not half such a *fine* preacher as they have got at —. He is now their fixture; I should be sadly grieved at such a fixture with us. See the character of a preacher as depicted by Paul, 1 Cor. ii,—that is the preacher to whom, with the greatest thankfulness, I should be happy to give the right-hand of fellowship; and then old Simon's song shall be my death-bed song of praise, on behalf of a people I love as my own soul, many of whom are my crown, and rejoicing in the Lord—"Lord [now] lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

With kind affection to your deservedly much-beloved, believe me to be,

Yours very affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

To a friend,<sup>1</sup> whose kind and affectionate consolations were highly valued by Mr. Rowland Hill, he expresses himself on the loss he had sustained in these terms—"It could not but be supposed, that after a union of [nearly] sixty years, a separation must have been severely felt. Though for some weeks before

<sup>1</sup> Henry Brooker, Esq., Brighton.

Mrs. Hill's departure I was prepared for the stroke, yet, when the solemn event really took place, I found that anticipation proved but a feeble defence of what afterwards I was called to feel. *You* had once the same sharp trial to sustain, and I am sure, after such a trial as you were called to undergo, nature must have had hard struggles in you before you could say meekly—'Thy will be done.' To live without natural affection converts a man into a monster. The Creator of our nature has kindly interwoven it in our constitutions, to operate as a social bond between each other. Were we without it, the world would be a thousand times worse than it is; and though these bonds are most cruelly violated among such as are in a course of nature, yet where grace reigns through righteousness, how sweetly are we united to each other thereby, and how comfortably are we directed to those social and relative duties between each other, in which the present happiness of human life so much consists. While we are here, [we are] directed to love each other 'with pure hearts fervently,' [and] in the accomplishment of that command, we taste somewhat of the heaven that shall be, for heaven is a heaven of love, for 'God is love.' No wonder, if we feel at times considerable pain when these silken cords are snapped asunder in this world by the violent hands of death; but, blessed be God, in those regions, where death can no more enter, such sorrows can never interrupt our everlasting joy—'there we shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'"

For more than half a century had Mr. and Mrs. Rowland Hill been united by ties of the purest christian affection, such as are happily not severed by death, but extend into another state of existence, leaving to

the survivor the only true consolation, that members of the Redeemer's family, both in earth and heaven, are still one in him. The opposite characteristics of this truly venerable pair were, during a very long life, blended together in the most perfect harmony; and being each equally desirous to do good, what was wanting for this end in one, was generally supplied by the other. Gifted with a sound and discriminating judgment, Mrs. Hill managed with peculiar tact the difficult task of controlling her husband's ardent nature, without checking his usefulness or activity; and the weight of her influence was so nicely balanced, that it restrained, but did not repress, it wisely directed but did not dictate. The understanding with which she accepted the offer of Mr. Rowland Hill's hand was never forgotten or evaded by her, nor did she, in a single instance, during the whole term of their union, suffer personal convenience or inclination to impede such movements as he considered it his duty to make. Mrs. Hill's natural reserve prevented her being known or appreciated by casual visitors; but those whom she admitted to intimacy will ever cherish the liveliest recollections of the sincerity of her friendship, and of the solid though retiring qualities of her mind.

Instead of giving way to unavailing grief, or suffering his mind to prey upon itself in seclusion, Mr. Rowland Hill endeavoured to find comfort in affliction by seeking it in the concerns of his ministry. The members of Surry chapel were perpetually in his thoughts, and he used to express great anxiety for their welfare. He recollected that he had forgotten to give Mr. Jones, who went to supply his London pulpit soon after the funeral of Mrs. Hill, some in-

structions he thought necessary for the furtherance of his peculiar discipline, and as soon as the omission occurred to him, he wrote (——) as follows on the subject :—

*Wotton, 7th September, 1830.*

MY DEAR BROTHER JONES,

Before you went off for London I forgot to mention one thing. Though it is much more difficult to keep up proper christian discipline in London than in the country, yet if we cannot do what we would, we should do what we can, and aim at such a discipline as may prove a check to some, if it cannot prove a sufficient check to all. I have, therefore, felt my mind much grieved, that the visiting ministers at Surry chapel, during my absence, look upon our communicants' meeting, on a Monday evening, as unworthy of their notice and attention, whereby bad becomes abundantly worse. I am very soon to leave all these concerns, as it respects the church below, yet I wish to leave things in as good a plight as circumstances will admit; and for this end, let me humbly request you to set such an example, by your punctual attendance, that others may be excited, by your good example, to be ashamed to neglect that part of the service [to] which it is their duty to attend.

Alas for me! since the death of my attentive wife, the temporal concerns of my family, and little farming matters, are brought under my notice; and though I am thankful for the attention of —— and my servant Charles, somewhat of superintendency is needed by me;

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so much about the little things of this world. May the Lord make you the happy, honoured instrument



of preparing souls for a better world than this which I must soon leave. How happy should I be if I [could] live nearer to God. Most affectionate love to all, from theirs and

Yours very sincerely,

ROWLAND HILL.

Soon after the painful event, by which he had been bereaved of the beloved partner in his early sorrows and more recent joys, Mr. Rowland Hill quitted, for a few weeks, those scenes which daily reminded him of his trials and his loss. He went to Leamington, in Warwickshire, and endeavoured to divert his thoughts from affliction, by superintending the affairs of a chapel he designed to manage upon his customary plan. Unexpected opposition arose to the introduction of the liturgy, but he persevered successfully in his determination to make the service as like that of our church as possible. He wrote me a long letter, in which he mentions the difficulties he had encountered. "I am greatly indebted," he says, "to the support of some liberal-minded dissenters in that place;" but he annexes to this declaration, a strong complaint against the prejudices of others, who were hostile to the book of Common Prayer. This gave him the greatest uneasiness, and called forth the following characteristic question and reply in the letter, just mentioned:—"What sort of an evil is a sectarian spirit? It is the cruel iron wedge, of the devil's own forging, to separate christians from each other—christians thereby become like divided armies." With regard to the promoters of his object at Leamington, he says—"They are very anxious to come as near the church as they possibly can—but if they were to resign their



chapel entirely to the church, they exclude at one stroke every other protestant minister of any denomination." He proceeds, "while, therefore, the people at Leamington have opened their large and handsome chapel, by adopting the liturgic service, and have settled matters accordingly, yet, in the admission of good ministers of every denomination, they choose a little more liberty than the church allows." Mr. Hill was always a strong advocate for the liturgy of the church, and confessed, that while he condemned all *formality* in prayer, he found his devotions much assisted by our spiritual and edifying *forms*. It is part of the truest glory of our nation, that it possesses, under the sanction of the state, such an admirable standard of what the spirit of devotion in a people ought to be, which it is surely much more calculated to inspire than many, to use an expression of Mr. Hill's, of the "tiresome forms of others, disguised in an extemporaneous dress." I once mentioned to him, that I had heard it had been observed by a clergyman of his acquaintance—"If a man could but hear only half of the extempore prayers offered up in this country on any one Sunday, he would fall down on his knees in an ecstasy, to give vent to his thankfulness for the liturgy."—"That he would, sure enough," he replied,—“and let me ask, if a man's heart cannot respond to those spiritual petitions which abound in our service, what has grace done in it?" It is, indeed, also a matter of surprise, that they who object to forms altogether, do not see plainly, that if the words of supplication used by the minister are adopted by the people, they become to them, though uttered extempore, in every sense of the word, a *form*.

Mr. Rowland Hill returned to Wotton for a short time after his visit to Leamington, and then proceeded to London. In the beginning of the year 1831 he wrote me the following letter :—

*London, January 7th, 1831.*

MY DEAR SIDNEY,

\* \* \* \* \*

You talk of a visit to London ; whenever you can come I shall be happy to receive both you and yours.

\* \* \* \* \*

and how happy should I be if you were but permitted to allow me your *pulpit* services for my *domestic* accommodation. No wonder that I now feel myself worn out, both in body and mind. However the setting sun, in its decline, may diminish in respect of its meridian splendor, yet, in the magnificence of its beauty, it finishes its high celestial progress with a most grateful and pleasing serenity to the beholder's eye. You, dear Sidney, are, I trust, but still rising to the meridian of your ministerial career, not to be eclipsed by the clouds and mists that arise from this lower world. O that your fine path may be like "the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day !" In short, may your sun set with more grandeur than ever it arose, till it shall again arise in those bright regions, as yet unknown to us, to set no more !

While I was writing the above, yours arrived. I quite agree with you as it respects the evil tendency of the prophetic fancies that are jumping about in the skulls of some young clerical divines. I fear it will prove the cause of thrusting out some better things from their hearts, which will be the case, unless established by grace.

O these interruptions!—when will they suffer me to finish this jumble? Still their visit was on a most important object, . . . . . Leamington. That will draw a long sum out of my short purse. Most gladly, however, will that be parted with, if the end can be accomplished.

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I have marked the end of April, when you and yours are to be expected; but age so seriously bids me to look into the grave, that it is now high time to speak with caution respecting a future day.

Yours affectionately,

R. HILL.

Early in February I received another letter from him, in which he again alludes to the prophetic questions mentioned in the last.

*Surry chapel, Feb. 4th, 1831.*

MY DEAR SIDNEY,

Charles must write  
While I indite,  
For lack of sight,  
By candle-light.

. . . . . I remember the time you propose to visit me, and shall be happy to see you both. What a number of . . . . . have got *addleheaded* on the subject of the personal reign of Christ. I have been lately told that — is infected with the same mania. God help you and me to preach on the *spiritual* reign of Christ as much as we can: we never can go too far on *that subject*. I am sure this wild mania will be productive of much mischief, among some otherwise good-minded people. — may keep

his *maggots* and fine flourishing style to himself. I like Paul's plain style best. Better to feed the appetite of the hungry, than to tickle the fancies of the whimsical. This breed of preachers are apt soon to preach themselves out of breath, and come to nothing. May you and I never be the retailers of such *whipt-syllabub* divinity—better keep a cook's-shop to satisfy the *craving* appetite, than a confectioner's-shop to regale the *depraved* appetite of the dainty. Good *brown-bread* preaching is the best after all. I have been much shut up by a cold this winter, and expect soon to be shut up in my coffin—O for an increasing hope full of immortality!

Yours very affectionately,

ROWLAND HILL.

Kind love to your wife.

In another letter to me upon the same subject, he remarks—"I believe the present *itch* to prophesy upon prophecy, is calculated to promote much evil, and but little good. I believe no prophecy is to be understood till after it is accomplished. We may most safely conjecture, but not rashly determine, the times and seasons respecting such future events, which the Father hath kept in his own hands. Some people seem to have more brains of a certain sort than they know well how to manage: skittish fancy next steps in, sets the imagination at work, and from the symbolical and figurative expressions, in which future events are wisely hid from our eyes, whimsies by thousands possess the brain. But what is the bad result? Why, as these speculations are so very various, most of them must be wrong; and what sort of effect is this likely to produce on infidel minds? An

extract, however, is more to the point, from Bishop Hall—far beyond that which can be produced from the brains of Rowland Hill—‘O, blessed Saviour, what strange variety of conceits do I find concerning thy thousand years’ reign! What riddles are there in that prophecy, which no human tongue can read! Where to fix the beginning of that marvellous millenary and where the end; and what manner of reign it shall be, whether temporal or spiritual, on earth or in heaven, undergoes as many constructions as there are pens that have undertaken it; and yet, when all is done, I see thine apostle speak only of the souls of the martyrs reigning so long with thee, not of thy reigning so long on earth with those martyrs. How busy are the tongues of men, how are their brains taken up with the indeterminable construction of this enigmatical truth, when, in the mean time, the care of thy spiritual reign in their hearts is neglected! O, my Saviour, while others weary themselves with the disquisition of thy personal reign here upon earth for a thousand years, let it be the whole bent and study of my soul to make sure of my personal reign with thee in heaven to all eternity.’”

In the spring of 1831, Mr. Rowland Hill’s mind was exceedingly occupied with the affairs of the chapel at Leamington, which he determined to get entirely into his own possession. He says, in a letter to a friend, dated February 12th—“I am about to take upon myself the concerns of a large and handsome chapel at Leamington Spa, and put it into the hands of the Village Itinerancy, as future trustees for the public good.” He became extremely anxious about a fit and proper minister for that place of fashionable resort, and also for the appointment of his successor

at Surry chapel. Mr. Hill was very desirous to be succeeded by a clergyman of the church of England, of sentiments similar to his own, "who wished for a little more liberty." I frequently ventured to hint to him, that he would have little chance of finding, in these times, such a clergyman as he would approve, willing to accept his offer, unless he would allow his chapel to be placed under episcopal management. "Well," he replied, "Sidney, in that you must come over to me, not I to you churchmen—I cannot do it." His feelings on this question will be further evident, from a conversation which passed between him and his friend Mr. Collison, tutor of the seminary attached to the Village Itinerancy, who kindly gave me the substance of it in the following terms:—"He (Mr. Hill) stated to me, that he had been asked the question, whether Surry chapel could not become, by an act in his life-time, a regular episcopal chapel, under appropriate jurisdiction, and conformable to that order? He paused before he gave me his reply, and with great solemnity of manner he exclaimed—'I said, *No*, I cannot do that—when Surry chapel was erected, it was on the broad ground of the gospel. I received money from good people of all denominations, on my personal assurance that it should be so applied.'—Rising from his chair, and deepening the tones of his voice, he continued, 'I pledged myself that Surry chapel pulpit should be open to approved and good ministers of the gospel, of all denominations. I have always acted upon this plan, and I cannot with a good conscience do otherwise.'"

The clergymen from whom Mr. Rowland Hill would have willingly selected his successor, were too much attached to the church to desert it upon any

terms, even for a sphere of labour which came so apparently near their own in form. His anxiety to be assisted in his old age, and followed at his death by an episcopally ordained minister, was very great. In a letter to me he says, after a few remarks on seeing no prospect of my obtaining preferment—"that, however, shall rest with yourself, as I should be heartily glad, as I am just going out of the world, to see you established *rector* of *Surry chapel* [and] *vicar* of *Leamington*, where a very handsome chapel will soon be in my hands."<sup>2</sup> He adds, in his humorous way—"I say nothing about making you perpetual curate of *Wotton-under-edge*, being only a fit place of preferment for the poor *Welchman* who is there already."

<sup>2</sup> He purchased this chapel soon after.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Bible Society, 1831.*

THE effort made in the year 1831 to change the constitution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the unusual scene at its anniversary, will long be remembered with regret, by every sincere friend of that institution. In the midst of the confusion which pervaded the meeting Mr. Rowland Hill rose to speak, and was received with all the respect due to his age, character, and experience. In a few words, uttered with the truest dignity of manner, he pointed out the real nature of the question by which they were agitated, and rebuked the impatient spirit of the assembly. On the proposal to exclude from the society, all persons not professing belief in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, he remarked, that he wished all such belonged to it, because the Bible contained "the truth to convince them of their errors;" and he placed the point at issue on its proper footing, by the observation, "I do not ask *who* gives me the Bible, but *what sort* of a Bible he gives me?" After adverting to the sad spectacle presented by the want of harmony among christians, and to the triumph it afforded unbelievers,

Mr. Hill declared his determination to take leave of them, till the restoration of that happy union by which they had so long been distinguished. Being detained at the election for the University of Cambridge, I did not reach Mr. Rowland Hill's house till the evening of the day on which he made his memorable protest against all innovations in the constitution of the Bible Society. Mrs. Sidney arrived on the previous Monday, and as he had not seen her since Mrs. Hill's death, he was at first much agitated, and put out his hand without speaking. After a short time he said, "So you are come to see a poor old man, left all alone, just dropping into the grave," and made affecting allusions to his loss. As I was unable to get to town till between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, I found Mr. Hill was gone to bed; but he came down the next morning full of the preceding day's meeting—"Sidney," he began, "I went to the Bible Society yesterday, but there was such a noise I came away."

I told him I expected there would be a great commotion.

"Commotion indeed," he replied, "you never heard any thing like it. The proposal to turn out the Socinians appears to me to be altogether, in the present state of the society, unreasonable and unwise. If there was a danger of their gaining an *ascendancy*, or if they gave away another version of the Scriptures, I should be for separating from them at once; but as long as they are in the minority, and are content to circulate our bibles, it is quite preposterous to refuse to let them distribute the only antidote to their own errors. Why, for my part, I should be glad to get a Mahometan to receive and disperse our bibles; he might get good and would do good."

“What do you think, sir,” I asked, “of the other question on which so much has been said—beginning the proceedings with prayer? Surely you will be of opinion, that it is possible for christians to meet in the *spirit* of prayer, without the *act*, especially with such different views as to the latter.”

“Certainly it is ; and I consider the introduction of any religious *form* or *test* into the Bible Society utterly unnecessary—nay, impracticable.”

The missionary day at Surry chapel this year was the last Mr. Hill ever attended. He said in 1829, just before he entered the chapel, “I will read prayers a couple of years longer ; then I will give it up,”—and his prediction, if such it may be called, was fulfilled. He was in very low spirits the whole day, caused chiefly by his recollection, that it was the first occasion of the kind he had ever been without Mrs. Hill. As he went to the house, carrying a plate filled by those who pressed to give *him* their contributions, he sobbed aloud, and I heard him say as he came into the room, in a voice almost inarticulate through his emotion—“Another good minister<sup>1</sup> gone, I shall soon myself be numbered with the dead ; Lord help me to do a little more for him while I live.” He gave his usual dinner, and I sat in the place till then occupied by Mrs. Hill ; but a mournful foreboding prevailed—the shadow of death seemed to cast a gloom over the party. Mr. Hill scarcely spoke a word, but returned thanks after dinner with the most impressive solemnity, and when his guests departed, he retired to take his usual rest, after which he became more cheerful.

<sup>1</sup> He had just been informed of the death of a minister with whom he had long been acquainted.

Though the age and loneliness of Mr. Hill at times occasioned great depression, he was quite as frequently in a lively humour, and retained all his characteristic wit and drollery. One evening, when he was in high spirits, and enjoying a newspaper, which a relation was reading to him, a visiter was announced, who entered the room with the air of a man about to communicate some important or interesting intelligence.

"Sir, I have the greatest pleasure in calling on you, to say that I can offer you the opportunity of meeting a person endowed with a wonderful gift indeed."

"Pray, sir, what is that? I am getting almost too old to go a wonder hunting."

"The miraculous gift of tongues, sir; a lady possessing it is coming to spend a few hours with me, and I hasten to ask you to meet her."

Mr. Hill inquired, after sighing out, "Oh, dear!" with a wistful glance at the newspaper, "What language does she speak?"

"Why, sir, that is not known; some think she speaks two—but it is evidently regular language."

"Two languages no one can understand!—enough to craze any body."

"Oh, Mr. Hill! I am sorry to see an old man at your age ridicule such things."

"Are you, indeed, sir? I do not think I shall leave it off for all that."

The visiter, still unwilling to depart without making a proselyte, renewed his arguments, to the annoyance of Mr. Hill, who was always disappointed when interrupted in a newspaper.

The next question was—"If nobody knows what she says, how was it discovered that she speaks two languages?"

This, as may be supposed, elicited no satisfactory explanation ; but by way of terminating difficulties, as well as the visit, it was suggested as desirable, that some celebrated linguist should hear her performance of sounds.

The champion of tongues, finding his eloquence unavailing, at length took leave, expressing his regret at Mr. Hill's incredulity, to which the latter courteously observed—"I thank you, sir, all the same for your kind invitation ; but if she does not understand what she says herself, it is not likely that I should be much the wiser."

The worthy visiter, shaking his head, only replied—"Oh, sir ! I wish you could once see and hear, and then you would be convinced."

When he was gone, Mr. Hill looked up and said—"Now finish the debate—my poor old brains can take that in, though they cannot reach this wonderful woman's whimsies."

Mr. Rowland Hill never mentioned the recent exhibitions called the gift of tongues, without either ridiculing or deploring them ; and it is indeed much to be lamented, that christians should have been so led away by the power of their own imaginations. In the days of the apostles, the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit was given for clear and determinate purposes, and the gift of tongues was to enable unlearned but inspired men to address the Gentiles in their own languages. No one can deny that they were given with this view on the day of Pentecost ; and that their subsequent design was the same, is evident from the words of St. Paul—*tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not,*<sup>2</sup> and, therefore,

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xiv, 22.

as is justly observed by Whitby, not to be used in assemblies of the former. This declaration, and the following question of the apostle, surely ought to be decisive with such as have contended for the manifestations of the present day :—*If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say ye are mad ?*<sup>3</sup> The *diversities of gifts* spoken of by St. Paul were evidently essential to the early churches. These were, *wisdom* to teach ; *knowledge* to comprehend ; *faith* to enable them to work miracles ; *prophecy* to foresee and describe the trials, supports, and condition of their converts, and the church at large ; *discerning of spirits* to discriminate between operations of the Holy Ghost and the power of evil spirits, or the imaginations of men, as well as to judge of the sincerity and qualifications of individuals for various offices ; *the gift of tongues* to address strangers ; *the gift of interpretation* to describe what was thus spoken. All these were wanted in an infant church perfectly opposed to the world, and whose success depended not on the agency of man, but on the miraculous aid of the spirit of its divine founder. The *planting* of christianity was by the extraordinary powers of the Holy Ghost, its *watering* and increase by the ordinary, and the divine agency is never exerted without a definite object ; nothing is done in vain, either in the natural or the spiritual creation of God. If it be inquired, what proof have we of the presence of the Divine Spirit in the visible church of Christ, I answer, in the greatest of all miracles, *the conversion of a soul*. Neither healing diseases, raising the dead, or infliction of sudden judgments, is to be

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. v, 23.

compared with that power which, by means of an instrument so simple as preaching, lays the proud heart of man in the dust before the cross, raises him to holy joy, alters the habit of his mind and tenor of his life, gives him strength to bear scoffing and persecution, takes away the terrors of the grave, and turns the active current of the soul from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness. This is a miracle which the unbeliever *ought* to see if he does not. But no sign can savingly convert; this is the province of a direct influence of the Holy Ghost on hearts harder than adamant, till the Lord melts them by the fire of his word, and impresses on them when softened the seal of his divine image. God designs to raise from the chaotic mass of darkness and disorder that surrounds us, a creation of light and order, to his own glory; but here the sublimity of the Holy Spirit's agency consists in its gentleness: as in producing the old world, it is described as "brooding o'er the vast abyss," so now it rests with dove-like tenderness on the church, making it gradually pregnant with eternal glory, and indicates not its presence by fanatic gestures, wild and unmeaning exclamations, or the dreams and visions of enthusiasm.

As Mr. Rowland Hill was getting into his carriage, after one of the meetings at Exeter Hall this year, he grazed his leg against the step. He said it smarted a little, but took no further notice. In a few days it began to assume the appearance of violent inflammation, and confined him for some time to the house, of which, notwithstanding his years, he was very impatient. The injury was near being attended with the most serious results, from the difficulty in persuading him to nurse the limb sufficiently. While confined by



this accident, Mr. Hill's mind was much occupied with the affairs of his chapel at Leamington. The young man to whom he had committed the charge of that congregation received many letters from him, in which his observations on the temporal affairs of the place are interspersed with spiritual remarks, bearing the most gratifying evidence of the ripening of his mind for a better world. He says in one of them—"God will make you a blessing, so long as he shall keep you in the dust before him. It will be no great criminality, if I make a little alteration in [one passage] of the sacred volume. 'He filleth the hungry with good things, but the *proud* he sendeth empty away.' O that most lovely valley of humiliation!—the safest, the most lovely, the most fertile spot between the City of Destruction [and Heaven]. May you get into it, make your constant abode in it, and never get out of it, till from thence you shall be called to glory. O I could say a thousand things concerning this more than celestial valley. The air is so salubrious, the ground so fertile, the fruit so wholesome; while from the branches of every tree the voices of prayer and praise are heard in delightful concert with each other. While living in this valley, no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper, as all the fiery darts of the devil are sure to pass over our heads, since the enemy of souls cannot shoot *low* enough to reach us to our hurt. Take this hint from a very old man, just putting off his harness while you are just putting it on."

On Thursday, June 2nd, the appearance of the wound on Mr. Rowland Hill's leg being rather more favourable, he left London for Leamington, and, as he went by easy stages, he found himself able to preach once on the Sunday. The unsettled state of his af-

fairs in that place caused him considerable excitement, and brought on a return of the inflammatory symptoms. Still he would preach on the Tuesday evening; the consequence of which was, an alarming increase of his sufferings, and many days' confinement to his room. Towards the end of the month, however, he rallied beyond all expectation, and was able to preach on Sunday, July 3, to a most crowded congregation at Stratford-upon-Avon. From Stratford he went to Cheltenham, and preached there on the following Tuesday, with uncommon power and animation. He arrived at Wotton on the Wednesday, and was well enough to undertake one sermon on Sunday. Continual returns, however, of unpleasant appearances in his leg rendered the remainder of the autumn very trying. Towards the end of it he went to Leamington, where, by the blessing of God on the kind attention of a skilful surgeon, he rapidly recovered, and returned to Surry chapel late in the winter. The confinement Mr. Rowland Hill had undergone in the year 1831, tended very much to weaken his aged frame, and there were many visible signs in his constitution that nature was giving way. Still his mental faculties were perfectly unimpaired, and he manifested all the perspicuity, vigor, and imagination of youth. A letter to Mr. Jones contains his own description of his feelings in the early part of 1832.

*Surry chapel, Feb. 6th, 1832.*

MY DEAR BROTHER JONES,

Thanks for your letter: I am happy that divine success seems to attend the ministry of the word among you. As to myself, my strength is so far departed from me, that the morning service in this place

is as much as ever I can sustain. Though we are forbidden to take any thought for the morrow, yet I have many an anxious thought how I should be able to perform the duties of the Wotton service, without some extra aid. I feel that I am soon to go the way of all flesh : while the outward man is now so rapidly on the decay, my prayer is, that the inward man may be renewed day by day. As it is now highly necessary that I should have some one constantly with me, to preach when I feel unable, I should like to know what your plans are for the ensuing summer.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am extremely sorry to hear of the indisposition of —; her life is valuable, for the sake of her family, but you give me hopes that the sickness is not unto death ; may it be to the glory of God. O that I could feel a more lively hope in the good things I have been preaching so long ; most fully would I wish to say, “when heart and flesh fail me, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for evermore.” I have sent you some books : I have been pretty well drained in furnishing the library at Leamington.

\* \* \* \* \*

With kindest remembrances to Mr. and Mrs. Long, and all inquiring friends, from theirs and

Yours very sincerely,

ROWLAND HILL.

I also received a letter from him, in which he expresses the same sense of his bodily decay, and alludes to his anxiety concerning the future pastor of his London flock.

*Surry chapel house, March 8th, 1832.*

MY DEAR SIDNEY,

Why have I been so long in answering your letter on the offer of your visit to London? It is on account of the rapid debility I daily feel from declining years: though, perhaps, one cause may be through the necessity of being almost at times bed-ridden, from the injury received upon my shin-bone during the last public meetings in May. And though I cannot say that I have any particular disease, yet I am so far enfeebled, that even one sermon on a sabbath-day is quite as much as can be accomplished by me. In short, I am now breaking apace, and O that I could but feel, that as the outward man is decaying, the inward man is renewed day by day!

I have made up my mind to leave London, before the bustle of our different religious meetings in May: if, however, you and yours wish to come to town previously, I shall be happy to receive you, so far as strength and ability will permit. I mention the time I design to go out of town, that you may make your arrangements accordingly, and not be prevented visiting London at an earlier date, if that will be convenient for you.

Though I cannot say with Paul, the care of all the churches is upon me, yet O how happy should I be, if this important station in particular, were but blest with that minister, of a free, generous, open-hearted turn of mind, who would be my affectionate helpmate in my fast declining days: but, alas! where is such a one to be found? How grievous, that the late revival in the church has been disfigured by the vain imaginations of many who scarcely know what they are next

to believe. If any such were willing to come amongst us, by taking more liberty than the church allows, I should be afraid to trust them ; while too many dissenters are so far stiffened on their side the question, as to be afraid to submit to the apostle's advice, and to become all things to all men, that they may win the more to Christ.

\* \* \* \* \*

As long as I live, and afterwards, I trust the pulpit will be equally open to all who preach the pure and simple gospel of Christ, but not intermixed with the *whim-wams* of the present day. The fiery materials that compose the new opposition Bible Society, I find are quarrelling among themselves, and no wonder at it, while the new gang of prophesiers are amongst the most active of its supporters. Such sort of *phosphorus* materials will be sure to ignite among themselves. O that you and I may abide by that sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to resort, instructed by the Holy Ghost in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. I may further add, that as the tithe system, pluralities, and other church evils, whether real or supposed, are at present under investigation, some of our more bigoted rules may be brought under consideration. Neither in England nor in Scotland do we find such principles upheld as there formerly were. Surely a *reformation* of that which is wrong may be effected without a *demolition* of that which is right.

\* \* \* \* \*

Love to you both.

I am yours very affectionately,  
 ROWLAND HILL.

Mr. Hill did not leave London till May 7, and I had the pleasure of spending the week previous to his departure with him. I found him in excellent general health, but much weaker than I had ever before seen him, yet deprived of none of the clearness or vivacity of his intellect. There was a continual variation in his feelings, and though generally more comfortable than might have been expected, he was occasionally oppressed with a most trying langour. "Yesterday," he says, when writing to Mr. Broadley Wilson, "was one of my languid days. I feel as though I had got to the bottom of *the Hill Difficulty*: O that I was better acquainted with *the Valley of Humiliation*, as I am very sure I must soon enter *the Valley of the Shadow of Death*. O that I may be taught that pleasant song more perfectly, 'yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.'" God keeps the real christian humble to the end, that he may be brought to lean on the only true support in the dark vale through which he must pass into eternity; a truth beautifully exemplified in the last days of Mr. Hill. His faith never failed, but it was unmingled with self-confidence; he trusted the stability of his anchor, and knew the firmness of the rock, fearing only frailty in the vessel. Taught from on high, he had learnt the plague of his own heart, as is evident from the following passage in a letter to Mr. Wilson:—"I feel myself increasingly the old man, yet I have reason to be thankful that I have no other disease, than that which old age naturally brings with it. My course I am sure now must soon be finished. O that grace may be given me to lay down this life with holy tranquillity and joy; but O this corrupted heart, how it in-

interrupts our peace and joy even to the last." Like the great Henry, Mr. Hill wished to carry his repentance to the gates of heaven.

Notwithstanding his debility, Mr. Rowland Hill felt a strong inclination to make an effort to attend the meeting of the Bible Society in 1832, from which he was only prevented by the wetness of the day. "So, Sidney," he said to me on my return, "you have had I hear a peaceful day—I am thankful indeed for that, though I believe it was as well I did not go; it would have been too much for me." The excellent spirit of candour displayed on that occasion by Mr. Gerard Noel, and the happy restoration of unity and peace, will long dwell in the memories of those who rejoiced to welcome among them once more a minister so justly valued and beloved. Venerable as the Bible Society has long appeared, it has become more than ever an object of our admiration, from the dignity of its triumph over opponents from without and divisions within.

Lest he should be exhausted by the bustle of the other meetings, Mr. Rowland Hill retired to Leamington, and afterwards went to Wotton, where, in the month of August, Mrs Sidney and I visited him for the last time. On our arrival, I found that he had engaged the pulpit of the church for me, and that he intended to shut up his own chapel on the afternoons of the two Sundays we were to pass with him. He was extremely feeble, and was evidently breaking, but seemed generally revived by preaching. One Sunday morning he said to Mr. Jones—"You must preach this morning; I feel good for nothing." "No, no, sir," he replied; I ventured to say, "I hope you will, Mr. Jones." He smiled, and said—"I would readily if I



did not think a sermon would do Mr. Hill good, and you will see it will." Accordingly, Mr. Hill preached himself, and, as I heard on my return from church, with entire forgetfulness of his debility. His text was, *then Manasseh knew the Lord*: 2Chron.xxxiii, 13; and he spoke for more than an hour! In the morning I thought him utterly unequal to the task of addressing his people, but in the afternoon he was full of animation. "There, sir," said Mr. Jones, "I told you preaching would cure you," to which he answered good humouredly, "I believe you were right, you cunning Welshman." He next turned to me and said—"Sidney, I wish your church rules would let you preach for us this evening." "Sir," I replied, "I am very well contented to obey them as they are." "Ah!" he exclaimed, "good old Mr. Berridge used to give notice (and here he imitated his voice and manner) 'Mr. Gwinnapp will preach upon my horse-block this evening; I wish I could ask him to preach in the church.'" This said Mr. Gwinnapp was one of Mr. Berridge's lay coadjutors when Mr. Hill was at Cambridge.

On the last day I ever spent with Mr. Rowland Hill, I was invited to preach at a neighbouring village in the morning. Though he had been to hear me the previous day, when I took the weekly lecture in the church at Wotton, his affectionate kindness induced him to go again. I never saw him afterwards in a place of worship; but the solemn and devotional feeling he then manifested has left an indelible impression on my mind. He made the responses of the liturgy in a subdued but feeling tone, lifting up his hand occasionally, and laying a natural and appropriate emphasis on such portions of the prayers as more particularly

seemed to contain petitions for the blessings he most needed. Numbers of Mr. Rowland Hill's people were present, and it was most affecting to see the manner in which they crowded round him as he left the church, pressing to shake him by the hand, and to shew him every possible token of their love. As we were to go away early the following morning, I was desirous to have taken leave of Mr. Hill that night, but he said, "No, I shall see you to-morrow;" and accordingly soon after seven o'clock, to our surprise, he made his appearance. On my regretting the exertion he had made, he replied, "Never mind, I shall sleep all the better to night for my early rising; I wished to see the last of you." He sat down in a chair in the dining-room, apparently lost in thought, and when I took him by the hand at parting, he could scarcely articulate "God bless you both! I shall see you in town in the spring, if I live so long; but I feel that I have but a short season longer left me here." This was my final interview with him, who had for years acted towards me with the affection of a parent.

The increasing weakness of Mr. Hill perpetually reminded him that his time was short, and allusions to his death constantly pervaded his conversation and letters. He remarked, when writing to a friend, "As to my mind, I only wish to commend myself to the blessing of Him, who alone can preserve us in our solemn exit from this world of woe." He further continues—"We need not fear sickness or death, when once we can confidently say by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, *death is swallowed up in victory*. Alas! for me, one sermon on the sabbath, and one in the week, is as much as I can accomplish. This is being brought to short commons, when compared with what, in the

former part of my life, I have been accustomed to perform." Mr. Hill's inability to work was the only source of his disquietude: his lamp was still full of oil, but the waning of the flame foretold that it would soon cease to burn.

In the autumn of 1832, Mr. Rowland Hill was invited to preach in the church at Wallingford, once served by his old friend Mr. Pentycross. He had been there in 1831, and was now urged to return, and was offered, as an additional attraction, other pulpits in adjacent churches. Mr. Langley, the rector of St. Mary's, Wallingford, in a communication he obligingly sent me, says, "Mr. Hill could have had five or six churches in this neighbourhood, so completely had prejudice worn away, and it was his rule when he could get the church, never to preach in a meeting-house. In 1831, when he preached for me, he preached for a clerical brother at Wooburn, Bucks." The following letter is Mr. Hill's reply to Mr. Langley's invitation to Wallingford:—

*Wotton-under-edge, Nov. 14th, 1832.*

MY DEAR SIR,

No wonder that a man in his 89th year should, from dimness of sight, be obliged to write by dictation. You have my affectionate thanks for your kind invitation to your house and pulpit: Providence, however, seems to direct me another way. Leamington Spa, though a very growing place, has till of late, been in a very dead state respecting the means of grace. By the kind providence of God, I have been enabled to purchase for them a chapel, in which, having established our liturgic service, many have been induced to hear the word of life.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

It therefore seems to be my duty to go somewhat out of my way to London, in order that I may nurse up that infant cause. Be assured I otherwise should have been glad to have paid Wallingford another visit, and, had strength been granted, to have preached in other churches: for I must say of the establishment, as Cowper said of the state,

England! with all thy faults I love thee still;

though I have my fears lest the present talk of a reformation of some abuses will prove of no effect, while some outward amendments may take place, and she internally not be the better for it. This can only be accomplished by the sending forth of such spiritual ministers, as are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them that office of administration.

I hope you have accepted the invitation to preach the annual sermon for our *Catholic Missionary Society*, it being willing to send forth ministers of any *Protestant* denomination, who are capable of holding forth the word of life to perishing sinners. If you have no better accommodations when you come to London in May next (though it seems presumptuous in me to talk of what I should like to do six months hence) I should be heartily glad to give you and Mrs. Langley bed and board at my house; and if you choose to follow the same example as your predecessor, Mr. Pentycross, you shall be heartily welcome to my pulpit also. Though I do not wish to see these walls of separation entirely demolished, yet I should be heartily glad if they were so far lowered, as that we could come nearer to shake hands with each other. Perhaps *you* may live to see better days in this respect,

though I cannot, as I feel the time of my departure is just at hand.

And when I 'm to die,  
Receive me I 'll cry,  
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Langley, believe me to be,  
Most sincerely and affectionately yours,  
ROWLAND HILL.

Rev. John Langley,  
Rector of St. Mary's, Wallingford.

I have not met with a letter more characteristic of Mr. Rowland Hill than this : his love for the church, his missionary principles, his desire to obtain clerical aid in Surry chapel, and the feeling with which he anticipated his decease, are all embodied in it. The lines quoted were perpetually on his lips for nearly a year before he died ; and when he came to the last words, he would repeat them with a strong emphasis —“ No, indeed, *I cannot tell why*—every sinner saved is a mysterious monument of redeeming love.” With regard to the walls of separation between different orders of christians, he did not wish such partitions destroyed, “ but only *lowered*, that we may shake hands a little easier over them,” especially, as he would have willingly added, if *old Bigotry*, who kept parties close prisoners within these inclosures, was but dead and buried. In one of the first sermons preached for the London Missionary Society, Dr. Bogue, eyeing with delight the mixed congregation, exclaimed, “ Behold us here assembled with one accord to attend the funeral of *old Bigotry*,” which

caused Mr. Hill to write an epitaph upon her, beginning

Here lies old Bigotry, abhorred  
By all who love our common Lord.

If, however, old Bigotry did die on that occasion, Mr. Hill seemed to think she had been succeeded, to her heart's content, by *Party-Spirit*. This may be gathered from the following letter to me:—

*Leamington Spa, Nov. 24th, 1832.*

MY DEAR SIDNEY,

I understand you wish to know how I am, and as I am writing to Lord Hill, I enclose this note to tell you where I am, and that I hope to be in London by the latter end of next month. . . . . as I am nearly worn down, I find it will be necessary to have an assistant. . . . . Though I have no particular disease, yet the lassitude of old age will not let me do the things that I would. I hope some good is doing in this place; but after all my efforts to establish a place of worship as similar to the church as circumstances will admit, I find the high church party are by no means content with it. They talk, therefore, of building for themselves; and as I have had trouble enough from rigid dissenters, it seems I am to expect a similar trial from the very opposite quarter. High and low church sectarianism seems to be the order of the day: we are much more busy in contending for *parties* than for *principles*. I hear perpetually that there is as much whimsicality and defectiveness among your church party as there can be bigotry among the dissenters. With kind love to Mrs. Sidney,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

ROWLAND HILL.

When Mr. Hill expressed his disappointment, that though he came "as near the church as possible," he could not satisfy her members, he ought to have reflected, that he as much dissented from the discipline, as others do from the forms or doctrines prescribed by her laws; and that the clergy were quite as much justified in rigidly maintaining their *order*, as he could possibly be in defending his own system. That party-spirit, however, is dividing and weakening the christian world is a fact as lamentable as it is undeniable, and results in a great measure from a want of due impression as to our accountableness for the moral discipline of our understandings. In the control of our bodily actions we refrain from our inclinations for the sake of reaping an ultimate benefit; but as respects our reason, we are too apt *to do as we like*, and will not give up a single particle of prejudice or opinion to promote a wider union. New parties, new societies, are formed in an instant, and as quickly deserted again, by persons who, either on cooler reflection, see their error, or with all the impetuosity of an unbridled imagination, spurred on by enthusiasm, rush into the wilds of fanaticism. A man, also, is more frequently judged of in these days, by the party he belongs to, by what particular things he admits or abstains from, than by the general tenor of his daily life; and, what is more than all to be deplored, an angry spirit is suffered to expel from the heart brotherly love and forbearance. These evils were justly deplored by Mr. Rowland Hill, as evidences of a lack of genuine christianity. True faith, like the dove sent forth by Noah, may for a season hover over the waters without finding a resting place, but will always return to the ark, bearing the olive branch of peace and love.



During the last eighteen months, or thereabouts, of Mr. Hill's life, he engaged in almost every cause, with the impression that it would probably be the last effort he should make for it. His friend Mr. George Clayton, in a letter to me, thus strikingly depicted his manner and feelings on one of these occasions:—  
“The last time he occupied my pulpit at Walworth, when he preached excellently for an hour, on behalf of a charitable institution (it was in the winter twelve-month before his death), he retired to the vestry after service, under feelings of great and manifest exhaustion. There he remained, till every individual save the pew-openers, his servant, and myself, had left the place. At length, he seemed with some reluctance, to have summoned energy enough to take his departure, intimating that it was in all probability the last time he should preach in Walworth. Charles<sup>4</sup> went before to open the carriage door—the pew-openers remained in the vestry. I offered my arm, which he declined, and then followed him as he passed down the aisle of the chapel. The lights were nearly extinguished, the silence was profound, nothing indeed was heard, but the slow majestic tread of his own footsteps, when in an under tone he thus soliloquized,

‘And when I ’m to die,  
Receive me I ’ll cry,  
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why;  
But this I can find,  
We two are so joined,  
That he ’ll not be in glory and leave me behind.’

To my heart this was a scene of unequalled solemnity, nor can I ever recur to it without a revival of that

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Hill's servant.

hallowed, sacred, shuddering sympathy which it originally awakened." This description is not overwrought; no man could witness Mr. Hill's manner when he contemplated his departure without an impression which probably will never be obliterated from his memory.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *Christian sabbath.*

ONE of the last acts of Mr. Rowland Hill was to publish, in the *Leamington Spa Courier*, an exhortation to the due observance of the Christian sabbath. This was attacked, in a letter to the editor, by a person signing himself "Oliver," who called it "a sermon in a newspaper," which he said was "certainly a rarity," and added, that "if an individual will preach in a newspaper instead of in a pulpit, he must expect to be answered." The writer admitted that the word sabbath signifies rest from labour, and that the command requires it to be kept holy, but exclaimed against "a puritanical and pharisaical observance of the day," or "a temporary imprisonment and a rueful visage." "The man of business," he also observed, "the artizan, the labourer, who is necessarily engaged six days, would find the seventh so irksome, were he to venture on the course advocated in your correspondent's letter, that the day of rest would no longer be considered a blessing." To these observations Mr. Hill replied, in a letter dated Surry chapel, Jan. 7, 1833, and assured Mr. Oliver that his face was "not a whit longer than his own, and that he was ready to admit

that an innocent walk in the open air with a serious friend, engaged in some proper Sunday talk, may be as conducive to real edification as being shut up in some gloomy habitation." Mr. Hill concluded by placing the devotion of a christian, and his keeping the sabbath-day, upon other proper scriptural grounds, calling them "the *easy practice* of such as are made partakers of a divine nature, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds." Strict observance of the sabbath was forced on the Jews by severe denunciations and appalling penalties; but under our milder dispensation, all religious duties, though not less binding on that account, partake of the nature of *privilege*. These are viewed by regenerate men, not as hard and uncongenial requirements, but as spiritual pleasures; the law no longer appears on tablets of stone, but written on the hearts of believers, insures obedience, not to its letter by *penalties*, so much as to its *spirit* by love.

Mr. Hill used to say the very sunshine, upon the day when he was called to the holy privilege of serving his God, seemed more genial to him than at any other time: he never thought of the punishment to be inflicted for neglect of sabbath duties, but was wrapt up in holy relish of their sweetness. That wisely regulated laws should enforce respect to the sabbath is honourable to every christian nation; but observance of sabbatic rest, to be acceptable to God and truly profitable to man, must come from a heart changed and sanctified by grace. True obedience proceeds from the affections; and, therefore, Isaiah not only requires of the Jews external observance, but to *call the sabbath a delight*.<sup>1</sup> Never did any individual

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lviii, 13.

more strongly evince this feeling than Mr. Rowland Hill, and they who spent a Sunday in his company, were always much struck with his manner and appearance, as indicative of a most exalted state of piety, and a serene and heavenly pleasure in the worship of God. He used sometimes to ejaculate, quoting his own lines,

O for the grace to live to Thee,  
 What can an angel wish for more !  
 Dear Saviour, come and let me be  
 The subject of this mighty power.

The increasing langour and debility of old age prevented Mr. Hill, in the spring of 1833, from engaging to preach, except once on the Sunday in Surry chapel, and he was obliged to be supported by an elevated and not very easy seat in the pulpit. The ladies of his congregation, observing with regret that he appeared uncomfortable, resolved to present him with such a chair as would obviate all the inconvenience he had long suffered. This they sent him with an appropriate and respectful letter, to which he returned the following reply :—

*February 15th, 1833.*

MY VERY DEAR AND AFFECTIONATE FRIENDS,

I cannot sufficiently express the warmth of my gratitude for your affectionate present of such a commodious chair for the pulpit, especially as it is a proof of the very kind attention manifested by some of the most honourable and respectable of the female part of the congregation assembling in Surry chapel.

As I cannot expect long to occupy the very comfortable accommodation you have provided for me, may I therefore entreat you to address the Great Head of the church, that he would send you such helps and

ministers as shall completely outshine the dwindling taper, whose physical strength is now almost exhausted, though not his affectionate regards to a congregation who have always manifested such love and esteem.

Though I feel myself less than the least, and unworthy of such kind attention, I still can most heartily subscribe myself, your willing servant in the Redeemer's cause,

ROWLAND HILL.

Those of Mr. Hill's congregation who were more particularly favoured with his friendship, watched him as he drew near to the grave with all the solicitude of children for a parent. He had nothing to disturb his repose in extreme old age, but the occasional derangement of the somewhat imperfect machinery by which his system was carried on in the several places of worship under his care. To this, particularly as respected Leamington, his letters constantly refer, and are chiefly short dictations on matters of business, and arrangements of his summer plans, without any particular sentiments to require their introduction into these pages. Indeed, all his letters were written amidst the hurry and interruptions of his numerous engagements, which accounts for their unstudied and often careless style. In those I received from him a few weeks before his death, he alludes chiefly to his often repeated wish to be succeeded by a clergyman at Surry chapel. In one of them, written to say that he was commissioned, by the patrons of a church likely to become vacant in a large and populous district, to inquire if I would accept it, he observes—"I should be glad to get you to stop short, and be minister of Surry chapel." Mr. Hill remained however steadfast

in his determination to keep it open on what he called his *broad principle*, and this was quite as much the result of a sense of honour as of inclination, as may be collected from the conversation with Mr. Collison already alluded to. Three times, shortly before his death, I received communications from him on this subject; the second of which, contained in a letter announcing the intention of the clergyman of the church just mentioned not to resign his situation, was in these terms—"I have no other preferment to offer you but that of Surry chapel, but as we cannot put ourselves under the management of the established church I must say nothing on that head." Mr. Hill used freely to admit, that as a useful and commanding post, the church had no equal; but he considered that even this might be rendered more efficient, without any violation of principle, and particularly by giving power to the clergy to admit as visiters, ministers of certain other orthodox protestant denominations.

Some such concessions, wisely regulated and judiciously used, would perhaps tend rather to increase than diminish the stability of our position; but the great evil to be deplored in the present day is, that men, because the church is not perfect according to their views, quit it altogether. Every church made up of fallible human beings must necessarily be a mixture of flesh and spirit; but to make defects an excuse for irregularities or separation is contrary to the spirit and tenor of scripture, which rather enjoins us to correct than to forsake. Where, in the midst of all the invectives of the apostle against the church of Corinth, is there a single word to be found about withdrawing from it; or when those of Asia are reproved, can any man discover a command to separate from them? It has



been asked, where was your church before the time of the reformers? The answer to this is obvious, and has often been given, where it is now. It was obscured by the church of Rome, of which it never was an integral member, like corn in the midst of a profusion of tares; and our reformers did not *innovate*, but *renovate*, they did not *institute*, they only *restored*. The lapse of ages will necessarily render alterations of some kind essential in all human institutions, but it yet remains to be proved that any thing has been gained, either in spirituality or usefulness, by those who, approving of our church's standard of doctrine, have deserted her because of some defects in her machinery, which can only be gradually accommodated to the changes of time.

If Mr. Rowland Hill occasionally made remarks on what he called the *stiffness* of the church, he even more strongly censured the increasing narrow-mindedness he witnessed among many of the dissenters; and only a few weeks before his last illness jocularly proposed to advertise for "a wet-nurse of the same denomination, in the family of a *dissenter to the back-bone*, to take care of a child who was to be brought up to the *same way of thinking*"—but knowing the really excellent qualities of his heart, few persons were offended by his humour. In the postscript of the last letter I ever received from Mr. Hill, he again alludes to his wish to be succeeded by a clergyman. The letter itself contains nothing of any moment, but it was his *last* to me, and it shews that even in his 89th year, the energies of a once indefatigable spirit were not quite exhausted.

*Surry chapel, March 4th, 1833.*

MY DEAR SIDNEY,

I can now tell you my arrangements, that you may be able to make yours. I purpose, by the will of God, to leave this place on Tuesday, the thirtieth of April, for Dorking. . . . . The next day I go to Brighton, to spend a fortnight or three weeks. . . . . From the latter place I find I can cross the country to Oxford, and from thence to Leamington, stay there about a month, and then proceed to Wotton for the remainder of the summer; at which place I shall be happy to see you and yours as long as you can manage to stay.

\* \* \* \* \*

There your services in the church will be very acceptable, and probably useful. . . .

I am, yours very sincerely,

ROWLAND HILL.

P.S. . . . . could you but hear the voice pronouncing, "loose him and let him go," all these matters would be settled at once.

I am induced to make this statement of Mr. Hill's wish respecting his successor, by the various reports which I have heard upon the subject. No doubt he could have found a man to occupy his place at his decease, with all the qualifications he desired, except episcopal ordination, among the many pious, liberal, and enlightened dissenters of his acquaintance; but he retained the fond hope, even to the last, that he should meet with a clergyman, as he styled it, "panting for more liberty." These, however, are not days in which the members of our church can complain of want of

liberty, and surely the parochial clergy enjoy as much of the essentials of that blessing, as the ministers of any dissenting community. Assailed as our church now is, it becomes us to unite and put on our armour, remembering that our breastplate is righteousness, in which we must *shine* before men. The armies of Rome, by dazzling the eyes of their opponents with the splendour of their polished breastplates, often awed them to surrender without drawing a sword:—we hope the church is now polishing her harness, and that she will conquer rather by lustre than by strength. When Mr. Hill first became a preacher many slept upon their weapons, or woke only to thwart those who were willing to fight the battles of the Lord; and in such a case, that zealous men should require a little more liberty to go forth in detachments, was excusable amidst the difficulties of their times; but after all, it is from our well-formed and disciplined ranks now brought into the field, that the final decisive victory will be gained. This opinion is not less warranted by scripture than by reason, as is evident from the language of St. Paul, who writes to the Colossians,<sup>2</sup> that he was with them in spirit, “joying and beholding their *order* and stedfastness of their faith in Christ”—and it is worthy of remark how strikingly he connects στερεωµὰ, *firmness*, with τάξις, *order*.

It is time, however, to pass on to the closing scene of the days of Mr. Rowland Hill. Though his increasing weakness, plainly foretold that he must soon be taken from his people and his friends, yet he was removed at last in a more sudden manner than could have been anticipated. On Sunday, March 31, he preached for the last time, on 1 Cor. ii, 7, 8, and felt so well that he engaged to

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii, 5.

preach again on the following Tuesday, to the teachers of the Southwark Sunday School Union, but he became so extremely languid on that day as to be obliged to request his assistant, Mr. Weight, to officiate for him. At the conclusion of a short sermon from this worthy minister, Mr. Hill ascended the pulpit, and delivered, with unusual fervour and animation, a brief and affectionate address, by which he was completely exhausted. Feeble as he was, he told those who heard him, he rejoiced still to feel his heart in the work; and after urging them to dedicate their youth to the glory of God, he ended with invoking the divine blessing on their labours. This was his last effort: that day the doors of Surry chapel closed on their devoted pastor for ever. Notwithstanding his strength was almost gone, Mr. Hill intended to preach again on Good Friday, and though at breakfast he complained of excessive languor, he would, had not Mr. Weight been present, have made an effort to occupy the pulpit on that day. He was prevailed on, however, not only to give up preaching, but to remain in the house during the morning service; and about one o'clock he took an airing in his carriage towards Camberwell, but did not return so refreshed as was expected. Still he remained down stairs all day, and conversed as usual with persons who called to inquire after him. A surgeon, who came in during the evening, said that Mr. Hill's temporal arteries were distended, and threatened apoplexy; but by judicious treatment, these appearances were so far removed, that the next morning he rose at his usual hour in good spirits, and breakfasted with apparent appetite. The day passed off comfortably, and in the evening he had the newspapers read to him according to custom, making no

particular complaint. In fact, he thought of preaching on the Sunday, and had selected his text from 1 Pet. i, 3; but though not well enough to attempt a sermon, the whole day was spent by him in tolerable comfort, and he sat up till ten o'clock at night. On Easter Monday and Tuesday, the boys and girls, accompanied by their Sunday teachers, came as usual in procession to Surry chapel; but they were never more to hear the voice which had so often proclaimed to little children the invitations of a dying Saviour. Their devoted friend prayed earnestly in his family for the "young lambs" of the Redeemer's fold, watched their arrival from the window of his drawing-room, and listened to their voices, as they sung in assembled thousands, in his chapel, the last simple and touching hymns he wrote for them. On the first of these evenings, he dictated to Mr. Weight a string of aphorisms, one of which is singularly descriptive of his own character—"He" (the pious minister) "will not consider his own feelings, but lay himself out for the universal good of his Saviour's cause: he will spend and be spent for his Redeemer, and will *die harnessed* as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

During the evening of Tuesday, Mr. Hill's servant, Charles, observed such an alteration in his master, as induced him to send to inform Lord Hill of his situation. His lordship was unfortunately out of town, but his nephew and aid-de-camp, Captain George Hill, immediately attended, bringing with him his uncle's physician, who, in common with the other medical men, was of opinion that nature was giving way, but that from great strength of constitution he might rally for a short time. These were but faint hopes not to be realized; the hand of death was upon him.

The same tone of humility and self-abasement, which characterized Mr. Rowland Hill through life, was visible in his last moments. The dying lamp flared not forth the glittering flame of presumptuous assurance, but shone steadily to the end with a bright yet lowly hope. Reviewing his past doctrines, he declared, "Were I to live my life over again, I would preach just the same"—looking upwards to eternal glory, he cast himself into the dust, and only said "I shall creep into heaven *through some crevice in the door.*" His view of his own personal interest in Christ seemed nearly lost at times, in a sublime contemplation of the Saviour's glory; and his servant heard him cry out in the night,

How soon will thy seat of judgment appear,  
Prepare me to meet, and welcome Thee there.

Both when asleep and awake, his favourite lines, "And when I 'm to die," &c., were constantly on his lips. Sometimes he repeated part of his own beautiful hymn :<sup>3</sup>—

Gently my Saviour let me down  
To slumber in the arms of death;  
I rest my soul on Thee alone,  
E'en till my last expiring breath.

and he was overheard saying to himself, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

On the evening of the day before he died, Mr. Hill's mental aberrations were at times very painful; but when his mind did not wander, from the effects of disease, it

<sup>3</sup> This hymn was written by Mr. Hill for the comfort of a dying member of his Surry chapel congregation, who received it a few hours before death. I found it

was beautifully drawn towards heavenly objects. During one of the intervals of calm self-possession, he called for his servant, and desired him to read the *fifth* chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians; at the fourth verse, he looked up and said, "Ah, Charles, we do not like to die!"—at the seventeenth verse, he exclaimed in a strong tone, "*a new existence*, mind that—Ah, Charles, I shall soon leave you!"

amongst his papers, in his own hand-writing, and I believe it never has been printed. It is called,

#### THE PRAYER OF THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

Gently, my Saviour, let me down  
To slumber in the arms of death:  
I rest my soul on Thee alone,  
E'en till my last expiring breath.

Death's dreadful sting has lost its power:  
A ransom'd sinner, sav'd by grace,  
Lives but to die, and die no more,  
Unveil'd to see thy blissful face.

Soon will the storm of life be o'er,  
And I shall enter endless rest:  
There shall I live to sin no more,  
And bless thy name for ever blest.

Dear Saviour, let thy will be done;  
Like yielding clay I humbly lie,  
May every murmuring thought be gone,  
Most peacefully resign'd to die.

Bid me possess sweet peace within,  
Let child-like patience keep my heart;  
Then shall I feel my heaven begin  
Before my spirit hence depart.

Yes, and a brighter heaven still  
Awaits my soul through his rich grace,  
Who shall his word of truth reveal,  
Till call'd to sing his endless praise.

Hasten thy chariot, God of love,  
And fetch me from this world of woe;  
I long to reach those joys above,  
And bid farewell to all below.

There shall my raptur'd spirit raise  
Still louder notes than angels sing;  
High glories to Emmanuel's grace,  
My God, my Saviour, and my King.



The Rev. George Clayton was one of those who were admitted to Mr. Hill's room when he drew near his end, and from him I received this account of the last interview he had with his dying friend: "I was at his bedside within a few hours of his dissolution: it was truly an impressive scene. Lord Hill's physician was with him when I arrived, and remarked that nothing more could be attempted for the venerable patient, and the expected change must soon take place. Mr. Hill grasped my hand with much affection, and said, 'You have often seen me ill, and I recovered; but this is an irrecoverable complaint. I shall not get over it—it is a solemn thing to die. I have no rapturous joys, but peace—a good hope through grace—all through grace.' The Rev. T. Jackson, who was in the chamber, observed, 'You would not give up the hope you have, sir, for all the world'—'No,' said he, 'not for *ten thousand thousand worlds*. Christ is every thing to a dying man—but I want to be perfectly holy—perfectly like my dear Lord—without holiness there is no such thing as getting to heaven." After this he roused himself, and protested, with a strong effort, against the evils and dangers of Antinomianism, when Mr. Clayton, finding him exhausted, offered up a short prayer, and retired.

The last sign of sensibility he gave, was an evidence that he understood, though unable to articulate, his favourite verses, *And when I'm to die, &c.*, repeated to him by Mr. Weight. About twenty-five minutes before six on Thursday evening, April 11, his happy spirit was released from the bondage of mortality, without sigh, or groan, or any other evidence of the agony of a last struggle. Those about him could scarcely believe he was gone, so peaceful was his end

—so gently, in answer to his own prayer, was he let down to slumber in the arms of death.

One of the most beautiful casts I ever saw, was taken of my excellent and venerable relative after his decease, by the well-known phrenologist Deville, the appearance of which indicated rather a balmy rest in slumber, than the painful fixedness of a corpse in death. The organs of his fine head were considered to be indicative of the prominent characteristics of his nature—benevolence, quickness of perception, strong attachment, firmness approaching to self-willedness, devotion to the truth, kindness to children, love of approbation, mirthfulness, attention to property, sense of justice. I was prevented by illness from seeing my dear guardian at the last, but this beautiful bust, in possession of the celebrated phrenologist, to whom it belongs, made an indelible impression on my memory.

As soon as the death of the venerable minister became known, all parties seemed to unite in doing honour to his memory. He was buried, at his own request, beneath the pulpit of Surry chapel, on Friday, April 19, and was followed to the grave both by clergymen and dissenting ministers.<sup>4</sup> The funeral was admirably conducted, and all confusion prevented by excellent regulations. The vast congregation, nearly all in deep mourning, were admitted by tickets, and presented, as they filled the galleries hung with black drapery, a mournful contrast to the animating scenes witnessed in the same place for nearly half a century. The vicinity of the chapel exhibited every possible token of respect, and shops partially shut, private

<sup>4</sup> One of these, Mr. Theophilus Jones, Mr. Hill's Wotton assistant, so often mentioned in this work, came to London to attend the funeral while under the effects of a slight attack of influenza. The journey and the excitement of the mournful scene increased it to such a degree, that he died in a few weeks after he had followed his venerable patron to the grave.

houses with closely drawn blinds, crowds in black, unable to gain admittance to the ceremony, showed that the last homage was being paid to a person of no ordinary popularity. Soon after eleven, the solemn procession left the house, and as it entered the chapel, a dirge was played upon that fine-toned organ, whose notes had so long been sounds of gladness in the ears that now could hear no longer. Lord Hill attended as chief mourner, and was followed by those invited to be present at the ceremony. Dr. Collyer read the first part of the burial service, when a hymn was sung, the last verse of which was often on the lips of him they were committing to the tomb :

“ When from the dust of death I rise,  
To take my mansion in the skies,  
E'en then shall this be all my plea,  
*Jesus hath liv'd and died for me.*”

As these words were singing the coffin was gently lowered into the grave, when the faltering voices in the choir, and the sobbing of such as were unable to refrain from audible expressions of their grief, presented a scene, which the lapse of many years will not efface from the memories of those who witnessed it. When the minister who read the conclusion of the service, substituted the word *father* for that of *brother*, a simultaneous burst of grief seemed to escape from the whole congregation. Those who had hitherto suppressed their emotions, were unable longer to subdue them, when touched with the tenderness of that deserved and endearing appellation. The moment when the body of one long beloved is committed as *dust to dust* and *ashes to ashes*, is generally that in which sorrow, before successfully controlled, breaks forth from the recesses of the soul—the hollow sound

of the coffin, when the earth is cast upon it, is ever the signal for an overflow of the accumulated flood of mental anguish. The power of that simple but touching ceremony was never more fully evinced than on this day: they who had hitherto remained silent and resigned, now wept aloud.

After a prayer from the Rev. George Clayton, followed by the singing of Luther's hymn, Mr. Jay ascended the pulpit to deliver a funeral sermon over the tomb of his departed friend. His text was, Zech. xi, 2;—*Howl fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen.* The affecting service was concluded by a prayer from the Rev. George Collison. When all was over, many looked into the grave, and dropped a parting tear upon the coffin, in which the form they once loved to gaze upon, now lay silent and unseen, beneath the very spot whence he had so long proclaimed the mercies and terrors of the Lord. His people can now behold his face no more in the flesh, but they will see him again on that day, when preachers and hearers shall render up their separate accounts before the judgment-seat of Christ. "There he lies," said Mr. Jay, pointing to the grave over which he was preaching—"Who lies?—The *preacher* once, the *witness* now."

The will of Mr. Rowland Hill was an object of much curiosity at the time of his death; but the only bequest<sup>5</sup> necessary to be mentioned here, is that the *residue* of his property was left to the Village Itinerancy, including, with certain deductions, his chapels and their appurtenances at Wotton and Leamington.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> It may, however, be noticed, that always the kindest and most affectionate of masters while he lived, he did not forget a liberal provision for his faithful servants.

<sup>6</sup> At the death of Mr. Hill, the numerous societies he supported drew up resolutions expressive of their respect to his memory. Amongst others, the Village Itinerancy put forth a long and able testimony to his character and usefulness, and it is only justice to them to add, before they were informed of his bequest.

Thus ended the earthly pilgrimage of one of the most devoted messengers of gospel truth that ever declared the way of mercy to mankind. It may be truly said of him, that from the early age of boyhood, to the hoary hairs of one approaching his ninetieth year, he had never spent a day, except confined by sickness, without some effort to promote the cause of his Redeemer, and this with no less energy when frowned on by his family, and despised by the world, than when he lived amidst the kindest attentions from relations, and basked in the exhilarating beams of an unequalled popularity. Though he was surrounded by many enemies in the early part of his career, not one of them could discover a spot in his character; and notwithstanding the fire of his eager spirit, the occasional haste with which he acted, and the eccentric course in which he moved, he has left behind him not only a lasting fame for unwearied diligence, undaunted resolution, and extraordinary success, but that which alone can give weight to the instructions of any minister, an unsullied reputation. What is a minister without a *character*? was his frequent inquiry—his was not only unstained, but unsuspected; and whenever a cloud passed across his sun, no one doubted that the light was still unmingled with impurity, though obscured for an instant. It was the study of Mr. Hill's entire life to maintain an untarnished honour, and it was his nature too: he did not shine in public with a light extinguished in private, but was himself the example of his own precepts. Once he was called to occupy the pulpit of a person whose character was, alas! not altogether immaculate, and who worried him with apologies because he could not offer him a *cassock*. "Sir," said Mr. Hill, who could not disguise his sentiments, "I can

preach without my *cassock*, but not without my *character*—character is of immense importance, sir, to a preacher of God's holy gospel."<sup>7</sup>

A consciousness of real virtue made Mr. Rowland Hill indifferent to the remarks of his enemies. On a particular occasion, he was scurrilously attacked in one of the public journals, and was urged by a zealous friend, exasperated against the writer, to bring a legal action in defence. To this the venerable servant of God replied, with calm, unruffled dignity—"I shall neither answer the libel, nor prosecute the writer, and that for two reasons—first, because, in attempting the former, I should probably be betrayed into unbecoming violence of temper and expression, to my own grief, and the wounding of my friends; and in the next place, I have learned by experience, *that no man's character can be eventually injured but by his own acts.*"

The person of Mr. Rowland Hill is well-known to the public. He was rather above the middle height in stature, and when young was remarkably thin, though wonderfully strong and active. His countenance was expressive of the complexion of his mind, and the play upon his lips, and piercing look of his small grey eyes, denoted both intelligence and humour. When between fifty and sixty years of age, his fine upright

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Hill never lost an opportunity of urging on young ministers the necessity of a spotless reputation. He was once addressing a number of candidates for the sacred office, and in adverting to this his constant theme, said—"I will tell you a story. A barber having amassed a comfortable independence, retired to his native place, where he became a preacher in a small chapel. Another person from the same village, being similarly fortunate, settled there also, and attended the ministry of the barber. Wanting a new wig, he said to his pastor, '*you might as well make it for me,*' to which he assented. The wig was sent home badly made, but charged at nearly double the usual price! The good man said nothing, but when any thing particularly profitable escaped the lips of the preacher, he observed to himself, '*excellent—but oh! the wig!*' When the barber prayed with apparent unction, he also thought, '*This should touch my heart—but oh! the wig!*' Now my dear young brethren, wherever you are placed, *remember the wig.*"



figure, combined with a high-bred, gentleman-like deportment, caused him to be the subject of general admiration; and when the weight of eighty years rested on his head, his erect form was not bowed down, nor was the vigour of his mind in the slightest degree impaired. A few years ago, a gentleman in a country town followed a crowd into a chapel, not the least knowing who was to be the preacher; on returning home, he said—"I have seen a man with *such a commanding air* as I never witnessed before—who can it be?" It was Mr. Rowland Hill; and this was the effect his appearance produced on all who saw him in his latter days; and as Johnson said of Burke, if any person had merely chanced to take shelter with him from a shower, he would have gone home and said, "I have seen an extraordinary man."

In his theological opinions, Mr. Rowland Hill leaned towards the tenets of Calvin, but what is called Hyper-Calvinism he could not endure. In a system of doctrine he was the follower of no man, but drew his sermons fresh from a prayerful reading of the Bible, and happy would it be for all ministers if they followed his example. By faith, and earnest entreaty for divine teaching, he let down his vessel into the wells of salvation, and the water came up clear, unpolluted by human traditions, unflavoured by dogmas, and unadulterated by the muddy conceits of man's fancied discoveries. He was for drawing together all the people of God wherever they could meet, and was willing to join in a universal communion with Christians of every name. When on one occasion he had preached in a chapel, where none but baptized adults were admitted to the sacrament, he wished to have communicated with them, but was told, respectfully,



“You cannot sit down at *our* table”—he only replied calmly, “I thought it was the *Lord’s* table.”

That Mr. Rowland Hill was made the means of great usefulness, no person acquainted with his history can deny; nor can man dictate a course of action, to those evidently raised up of God, in sluggish times, for the purpose of awakening the dormant energies of the church. The danger is, lest others should imitate, in days totally different from those in which he first appeared, what in the present state of things would be much more injurious than beneficial. No mode of religion can be arranged by our finite and imperfect faculties, so as to suit the composition of every mind, or meet the difficulties of every case; but if individuals are generally to prescribe for themselves, and apply their own remedies to particular portions of the system, they will soon pay dearly for their interference, by the derangement of the whole body. Were every soldier to fight with the weapons he thinks himself best skilled to use, or to occupy such a post as appears most advantageous to himself, it is evident that single and irregular instances of courage would but ill atone for the want of combined and uniform effect in an entire battalion. Had Mr. Hill confined himself for these last thirty years to the community of which by ordination he was a member, his talents as a preacher, his exalted character, and distinguished family connexions, would have opened to him a wide and most influential field of action, and he would have been spared numerous trials and embarrassments in which he was involved, from want of a well defined rule of action. His disinterestedness, true piety, fervent zeal, great success in conversions, the age in which he first became a preacher, and

the peculiarities of his nature, will, however, form an apology for a course in which few would have the power, if they possessed the inclination, to follow him. He that presumed to guide himself in a similar path, would, like Phaeton in the fable, when he ventured to drive the chariot of the sun, be precipitated speedily from his position, and become like him, in all but notoriety,

Infelix currûs auriga paterni.

In one thing all may follow him—daily penitence before God; and never was a more beautiful idea, than that which he repeatedly thus expressed—“If I may be permitted to drop one tear, as I enter the portals of the city of my God, it will be at taking an eternal leave of that beloved and profitable companion, *Repentance*.”

Mr. Rowland Hill was too much occupied by a perpetual round of preaching, and other active engagements, to devote much time to literary pursuits, or composition. He was a very fair scholar, and used sometimes jocularly to say, “I am thankful I am not obliged, when I quote a passage from the classics, to confess, like John Bunyan, (dear honest old soul) *the Latin I borrowed*.” In his controversial pamphlets he displayed great acuteness of reasoning, always seizing upon, and exposing the weak points of his opponents; but I am compelled to acknowledge that the shafts of his ridicule were often too keenly sharpened, and that his bow was strung too much after the fashion of the world. This, however, was an error into which many other good men have fallen, and which they, as well as my beloved relative, lamented in riper years and a maturer state of grace. His hymns

and *Token for Children*, are delightful productions, worthy to be introduced into every Sunday school : his catechism also deserves to be better known. The *Token for Children* commences with a sermon to the young, which those who read it will acknowledge to be, for plainness of language and adaptation to the infant understanding, a model for such addresses. It contains excellent observations, mingled with simple and engaging anecdotes, one of which, as a sample of his attractive mode of writing for and speaking to children, I will introduce here. "As children love stories, I will tell you another. Walking through my field on a winter's morning, I met with a lamb, as I thought, dead ; but taking it up I found it just alive ; the cruel mother had almost starved it to death. I put it into my bosom, and brought it to my house : there I rubbed its starved limbs, warmed it by the fire-side, and fed it with warm milk from the cow. Soon after the lamb revived : first, it feared me ; but afterwards it thoroughly loved me. As I mostly fed it with my own hand, so it followed me wherever I went, bleating after me, whenever it saw me, and was always happy when it could frisk around me, but never so pleased as when I would carry it in my arms. But you, dear children, have had more from your parents and friends than ever my lamb received from me ; what ungrateful hearts must yours be, if you do not love your parents and friends ten times better than ever my lamb loved me. And let me now remind you of a still better story. Jesus is a shepherd, the shepherd of souls ; and of him it is said, "he carries the lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. If you desire to love Jesus, I dare say your parents will let you read that blessed

book, the Bible, though good children alone wish for such a favour. There you will hear such things of the love of Christ to poor ruined sinners, as I hope will melt your eyes to tears, and your hearts to love.”<sup>8</sup> That one whose element was in the highest regions of sublime and lofty thought, should thus descend into the very midst of the lambs of the fold, and rejoice to lead them to the gentle flow of the source of an eternal spring of living waters, and to the tenderest herbage of a gospel’s greenest pastures, is surely an evidence of such love as none but new-born souls can enjoy, and will be considered as an atonement for any expressions of warmth or satirical invective, to which he gave vent in times of controversial excitement, and which no one more sincerely lamented than himself.

The opinions of Mr. Ambrose Serle on the *Warning to Professors*, and the *Village Dialogues*, already given, preclude the necessity of my adding to them many remarks of my own. He wrote most of the *Dialogues* on separate slips of paper, after Mrs. Hill had retired for the night; and I remember his once saying to me, when speaking of the pathetic portions of the work—“When I read them over I used to burst out a crying.” There are few who could peruse unmoved his *Prodigal’s Return*, and *Funeral of Mr. Merriman*, descriptions true to nature, because drawn from the remembrance of such events coming under his own observation; and indeed almost every character portrayed in these volumes, is from the original of some devoted, eccentric, or profligate individual. The religious doctrines advanced in the course of these

<sup>8</sup> *Instructions for Children, or a Token of Love, &c.* London: Page and Sons, Blackfriars’ Road. 1832. p. 16.

conversations are conformable to the articles and liturgy of our establishment; but I am convinced the work would have been much more useful, and certainly less exceptionable, had the place of ludicrous satire on negligent ministers, both in and out of the church, been supplied by a more serious and expostulatory method of treating evils, arising from an awful carelessness of pastoral duties. The consequences resulting from such unpardonable heedlessness, are far too appalling to be alluded to, in a tone even approaching to levity. Souls are lost by them, and, to use the sublime idea of the great Robert Hall, were all nature to become animated and vocal, it could not utter a groan sufficiently deep, or a cry sufficiently piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a stupendous catastrophe. Certainly Mr. Rowland Hill did not view the laughable events described by him as happening to ministers, in such a light as this: and it was always his custom, when speaking in private to those engaged in the sacred office, to address them with a gravity of manner which tended to impress upon their minds the deep responsibility that rested on them. I have seen young clergymen, whom he kindly noticed as my friends, affected almost to tears, even when they recollected the counsel he had given them; and sure I am, that no human being ever felt more strongly the value of souls, or the infinite, the overwhelming solemnity of ministerial engagements. This has, I trust, already appeared in these pages: his orb shone brightly and steadily, during a lengthened period of unwearied labour; and the venial eccentricities of his character, were only as sparks thrown off in the rapid revolutions he made in his peculiar course.

A tablet, surmounted by a bust, is soon to be erected in Surry chapel to the memory of my beloved and affectionate guardian, with the following inscription :—

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE  
REVEREND ROWLAND HILL, A.M.,  
FORMERLY OF  
SAINT JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
AND FOR  
HALF A CENTURY THE ZEALOUS, ACTIVE, AND DEVOTED  
MINISTER OF SURRY CHAPEL,  
THIS TABLET IS ERECTED, RATHER IN TOKEN  
OF  
THE GRATEFUL RECOLLECTIONS OF  
A REVERED PASTOR,  
BY HIS BEREAVED AND MOURNING CONGREGATION,  
THAN AS A TRIBUTE  
SUITABLE TO THE WORTH OF ONE,  
THE  
IMPERISHABLE MONUMENTS OF WHOSE LABOURS  
ARE THE  
NAMES WRITTEN IN HEAVEN OF THE MULTITUDES LED TO GOD  
BY HIS LONG AND FAITHFUL MINISTRY.

HIS MORTAL REMAINS  
WERE INTERRED IN THIS CHAPEL ON THE  
NINETEENTH DAY OF APRIL,  
A. D. MDCCCXXXIII.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *Religion during the last century.*

THE course pursued by Mr. Rowland Hill and his associates, can never be fully appreciated, without a brief retrospect of the religious state of this country, at the time when they first commenced their exertions. From the restoration of the Stuarts to the accession of the house of Hanover, the church of England was not without many able, zealous, and learned advocates of the cause of religion; nor has she, at any other period of her history, been favoured with men of greater erudition and powers of reasoning. Without, however, detracting from the merits of such able writers, it must be acknowledged that their talents were, with very few exceptions, employed rather to inculcate and defend systems of divinity, and modes of church government, than to awaken a sense of the *personal nature* and *heart-renewing* influences of genuine christianity. Upon the restoration of the royal family, the theme of every treatise was *conformity*, in order to eradicate the lax discipline of the late times; but as soon as the hostility of popery to our church appeared, a controversy immediately commenced between our divines and the papists. Many valuable books were then published, containing copious and clear



illustrations of controversial points, and unanswerable arguments in favour of our tenets, as contrasted with those of the church of Rome, which are deficient only in the *life* of religion. Thus these erudite and captivating works became often as injurious, from a want of the principles they withheld, as they were beneficial by what they taught; leading astray from those *fundamental* and *essential* truths upon which our reformers, no less learned, but much more spiritual, had happily based all the doctrines of our church. The good resulting from a powerful defence of the *externals* of religion, did not counterbalance the evil arising from an omission to lay due stress on the necessity of that *internal* grace, by which alone man's heart can be cleansed, so as "perfectly to love, and worthily to magnify" a God in Christ. "They stood," says Watson truly, in his *Life of Wesley*, "between the people and the better divines of the earlier age of the church, and put them out of sight:" their preaching, too, was of so cold, though refined and cultivated a style, that while it engaged and gratified the reason, it failed to awaken the dead in trespasses and sins. Christianity was portrayed as to the proportions and lineaments of her form, by hands that were masters of the art; but in the midst of all the graces and symmetry of a lovely image, life was wanting: there was no voice to reach the ear, no animation to awaken sympathy in the heart. Most of the clergy were ignorant of the gospel, and were content to add to a liturgic service, neither understood nor appreciated, a brief moral essay, instead of preaching Christ and Him crucified.<sup>1</sup> This deadness was not peculiar to the church; the

<sup>1</sup> "For a long season," says Berridge, "the good old church doctrines have been much forsaken; by some they are derided, and by many deserted. Yet no

same opiate had affected every religious community, and those who were not lulled into an ignoble repose, had better have slept than been employed as they were, though somewhat drowsily, it is true, in scattering the seeds of Socinian and Antinomian error: these were every where dropping the poison of the world into the cup of salvation, which, like the fabled glass of old, instantly detects the uncongenial infusion; the mixture becomes agitated, the lovely vessel bursts into a thousand fragments, presenting to our view only broken, scattered, and useless remnants of a once beauteous whole.

This state of things was not without exceptions in the zeal and characters of some, whose light, rendered more vivid and brilliant by surrounding darkness, was an object of hatred in the eyes of the immoral, who would gladly have put it out if they could.<sup>2</sup> To profligacy and vice, the inhabitants of our large towns, added a thorough abhorrence of the solemn warnings, which denounced the awful consequences of ignorance and sin, and formed ready combinations with our vil-

doctrines can build the church of Christ up but those which planted it. We may labour much in lopping off loose branches of immorality and infidelity, yet nothing will be done effectually till the axe is laid to the tree's root."—He observes further, "Men are rightly treated in a reading desk, and called by their proper name of *miserable sinners*, but in the pulpit they are complimented on the *dignity* of their earthly, sensual, devilish nature; are flattered with a princely *will* and *power* to save themselves; and are ornamented with a lusty badge of merit."—*Christian World Unmasked*.

<sup>2</sup> Considerable efforts were made, towards the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, to second the objects of the royal proclamation for the suppression of vice, and some thousands of convictions for immorality, of various descriptions, took place. Great exertions were also made for the establishment of schools—vide "An account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in the city of London, &c., and of the Endeavours for the Reformation of Manners which have been made therein, by Josiah Woodward, minister of Poplar, 1698,"—also other works giving a history of the manners of that period. However pious and laudable these exertions were, they do not appear to have been so thoroughly based upon gospel principles, and, therefore, not so efficient, as the subsequent labours of Whitefield, Wesley, and their contemporaries, who struck at the root of the evil, by going at once to the principle of a necessity of a change of heart as the source of true morality and virtue.

lagers, to insult every faithful witness who protested against their abominations.

Wesley and Whitefield, when they first entered on their arduous labours, had all these difficulties to contend with: they had not to dread the fire and the stake, but they were looked upon as the scum and offscouring of the earth, and were treated as such. They were men of widely different characters, both as respects their natural dispositions as well as the discipline of their minds, and painful frailties were visible in the midst of their true greatness, to shew that we are to regard them only as imperfect instruments, while the entire glory of all they effected is to be ascribed to God alone. An ambitious love of power was evidently the besetting weakness of John Wesley; aspiration after the honours, when he had no prospect of the sufferings of martyrdom, was that of Whitefield. In his letters to Mr. Rowland Hill at the beginning of this volume, it is evident how he courted and enjoyed persecution; and whenever *the fire*, to use his own expression, *was kindled in the country*, he was not satisfied unless *honoured* by being scorched a little in its flame. This was a wrong spirit, and did injury to his own mind and to his followers, by encouraging a morose and morbid carriage towards the world, giving needless offence, and provoking animosity, in those they might have attracted and endeared by the lovely graces of true christianity. Wesley had nothing of this sort in his constitution, and very properly resisted violence, when offered to himself or his adherents, in a legal and dignified manner. His people had been insulted on one occasion, by the officers of a regiment quartered at Lowestoft, in Suffolk; he immediately wrote to inform their com-

mandant of the fact, and asked for redress with becoming firmness. "Before," said he, "I use any other method, I beg of you, sir, who can do it with a word, to prevent our being insulted any more. We are men; we are Englishmen; as such, we have a natural and a legal right to liberty of conscience."<sup>3</sup> That Wesley and Whitefield sowed the seeds of a religious revival in our country is unquestionable, and I trust it will therefore be considered interesting, thus to notice the different spirit in which they engaged in the same enterprise.

I have mentioned, that the defect in writings on religion, which appeared in days immediately preceding those of the revivalists, was that they contained little or no allusion to the absolute necessity of a change of heart by *conversion*, as the true source of the social and relative, as well as the spiritual duties of man. Preaching morality alone, invariably leaves our hearers unawakened and unreformed; nor is there any pure and certain virtue, but such as proceeds from a renewed and sanctified state of mind. Hence, when Wesley and Whitefield began their labours, they struck at once at the root, and proclaimed the essential but unpalatable truth, that sinners must be *born again*, and that the only proof of our interest in a Saviour's atonement, is a soul renewed by the power of his Holy Spirit. Whatever different opinions the two great leaders had of the evidences and knowledge of the *time* of conversion, they happily agreed that it was a work of God upon the heart, and that its fruit was holiness. The credulous mind of Wesley led him often to mistake for divine influences, what was nothing but the

<sup>3</sup> This letter is amongst the valuable collection of autographs in the possession of Dawson Turner, Esq., of Yarmouth, by whom it was kindly communicated to me.

overflowing of a heated enthusiasm; and it is not a little extraordinary, that so acute and talented a man should have found a congenial situation in the midst of persons whose bodily contortions were a melancholy caricature of the genuine effects of conviction. That Wesley believed such fits and ravings as followed his preaching, to be the work of the Holy Spirit, none of his adherents have denied, though some of them have endeavoured, evidently perplexed at the absurdity, to soften down his opinions. Whitefield never encouraged these excesses, nor did he consider them as produced by the Spirit of God. Though differing as to the adjuncts of conversion, the champions of truth agreed as to its necessity, cause, and effects, and were doubtless instrumental in awakening the dormant energies of a great portion of their thoughtless fellow-creatures. They found at first able and willing coadjutors in the United Brethren; but afterwards a separation took place, the details of which do not belong to this work.

When the minds of Wesley and Whitefield were diverted from *present effects* to the unprofitable consideration of *final causes*, equally unfathomable in the natural and spiritual system of things, a breach between them was the speedy consequence. Wesley published a sermon on the doctrine of predestination, pointing out what he conceived to be its Antinomian tendency, at which Whitefield, who drew from it a directly opposite conclusion, took great offence. The controversy between the leaders caused a disunion of their societies; but in January 1750,<sup>4</sup> the supporters of vital religion were gratified by witnessing their recon-

<sup>4</sup> The forgiving spirit of both Whitefield and Wesley was most creditable to their christian feelings. When Whitefield died, John and Charles Wesley were found to be

ciliation. It was, however, only a smothering of the flame, which, after Whitefield's death, burst forth with an unextinguishable violence, burning to this hour, though happily with diminished vehemence.

While [Whitefield and Wesley were engaged in active itinerancy, Romaine was successfully employing in London the effective machinery of our church, by his adherence to which, he grafted on the parent stock, buds that are now filling the land with fruitfulness; while the scions, fixed upon many other stems, have either withered away or produced little else but leaves. He was sincerely attached to the doctrines and discipline of our establishment, and saw plainly, that to bring her authority into reverence, to make her services comprehended, and preach the truths contained in her articles and homilies, was the surest way of doing permanent good. Though he did not depreciate the usefulness of enlightened itinerants, in days of almost universal darkness, he clearly foresaw that without consummate prudence, both evils to others, and dangers to themselves, were to be apprehended from such a course. Sir Harry Trelawny, whose correspondence with Mr. Rowland Hill has been already referred to, earnestly requested Mr. Neale, of St. Paul's-churchyard, to introduce him to Mr. Romaine in his vestry. "Well," said Mr. Neale, "as you so much wish it, I certainly will, but mind, I do not promise you he will not be angry with us both, as he never speaks to any body there." They went together before the service, and Mr. Neale ventured to say to Mr. Romaine, "Sir, I hope you will give me leave to

designated in his will as "his honoured and dear friends, and disinterested fellow-labourers;" and Wesley preached a funeral sermon at Whitefield's death by his special desire.



bring in Sir Harry Trelawny, who is very desirous to speak to you."

"O, Sir Harry Trelawny! I have heard of him, you may."

On Sir Harry's entering, Mr. Romaine looked at him kindly, and said in a solemn tone,

"Sir, you *stand upon ice*—now you must excuse my saying more, as it is contrary to my custom to admit persons here."

Without denying that wherever the necessity of conversion by the Spirit of Christ was urged upon the people, both religious advantage and improved morals were the happy results, I think it will appear, upon looking at the present consequences of those important exertions, that the greatest ultimate benefit has flowed from such as adhered to the rules of our church. I have never met with a pious nonconformist who questioned the usefulness of Romaine's ministry in London, nor the value of his admirable writings: and if we look to places far removed from the metropolis, we shall see that a similar blessing has followed the well-regulated exertions of devoted clergymen during the last century. Take for instance the example of Edward Spencer, rector of Wingfield, in the county of Wilts. He was brought up at the feet of Whitefield, and was acquainted with Wesley; but he refused to labour without the pale of an episcopal communion. He was made the means of numerous conversions while curate of Bradford, and on his retirement to Wingfield, formed a school upon evangelical principles, in which several of our zealous clergy received their first religious impressions, and were led to enter the ministry they have long adorned.<sup>5</sup> Much

<sup>5</sup> Among his pupils were Crouch and Hill, of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and a long list of active and well-known clergy. Middleton bears testimony to the ex-



as he admired Whitefield and Wesley, Spencer foresaw the danger of moving with their rapid and eccentric evolutions, and the evils that would be entailed on posterity by the divisions of their parties.

The persons who had most influence in directing the newly awakened mind of Mr. Rowland Hill, were Whitefield and Berridge, to the former of whom he was more particularly led by his brother Richard, who had embraced Calvinistic opinions. Lady Huntingdon, also had paid him considerable attention; but though he always treated her memory with respect, and vindicated her character against aspersions during the Wesleyan controversy, I think he was not one of her ladyship's most cordial admirers. The mode in which she exercised her authority, was not suited to a mind impatient of restraint. Berridge, when he made himself known to Mr. Rowland Hill, was in the zenith of his activity, and together with Whitefield, inspired him with a kindred ardour. Much has been related in various books, of the excesses of the followers of Berridge; but from all I have ever gathered from Mr. Hill on the subject of his character, I am convinced that nothing of the sort took place during the time he constantly attended at Everton. Whatever enthusiasm Berridge may have manifested, before he threw off the opinions of Wesley, his view of the nature and mode of conversion, was afterwards sobered down into a right conception of that glorious work

cellent character of Spencer in his "Ecclesiastical Memoir of the first four decades of the reign of George III," p. 48, 49. I was under his tuition for several years, and well recollect being taken to his school by my beloved relative, Mr. Rowland Hill, who preached in Wingfield church, where the crowd was so excessive that Mr. Hill was obliged to stand upon the stairs of the pulpit, close to the door, while the prayers were being read. Numbers were unable to gain admittance, but the windows of the church being all opened, they stood in silence in the churchyard and heard the sermon.

of the Holy Ghost upon the soul. Mr. Rowland Hill never concealed his own opinion, of these fanatical misrepresentations of the effects of a divine power which acts gently on the heart, and I have even heard him say, "John Wesley was too willing to believe in such extravagancies: he ought to have known better."<sup>6</sup>

It is a striking and encouraging fact, that the zealous preachers of the Gospel, who sprung up in the times to which we are now referring, pointed with one consent to the doctrines of our church, as a pure standard of truth. They found what they wanted laid down there as the first principles of religion, namely, *Regeneration* and *Justification by Faith*, the latter of which Berridge truly called "the jewel of the gospel covenant, the ground work of the reformation, [and] the glory of the British church." They found that our Articles contained the master key to unlock the dungeons of error, in which Satan had long confined his willing captives, and they rejoiced to use it, but too much overlooked the necessity of arranging in order the multitudes who were set free. They cut down the harvest of the earth, but did not gather the corn into sheaves, so that it became the easy spoil of every bird of prey, while those who adhered to the discipline, marked out by our reformers if they reaped less, collected and preserved more. Whitefield exercised an arbitrary control over his immediate followers and friends, and carried his dictatorial spirit at times almost to an excess; but he did not possess the act of contriving and managing any organized

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Rowland Hill's views of these bodily affections may be seen in the Village Dialogues—Dialogue xlvi, called *Enthusiasm detected*, where the subject is ably treated. The names also of *Peggy Goosecap*, *Sally Fancy*, and *Janet Meagrim*, are not ill suited to the characters of too many females who are deplorably forgetful of the counsel of St. Paul.

system. The character of Wesley was precisely the reverse: he loved power, knew how to regulate his sect, and established and maintained, by a skilful arrangement of his classes and bands, under responsible leaders, an extraordinary influence over them. Lady Huntingdon did the same to a certain degree, in the formation of her *Connexion*, but with less talent. Whatever benefits may have arisen from the Methodist system, it has unquestionably led to some evils. Watch-nights and love-feasts have often acted as hotbeds to force, rather than as warmth to cherish the healthy growth of religion; the mode of conducting *classes*, in which believers engage to tell each other *the true state of their souls*, leads many to self-deception, or else to attempts to deceive others; while the *bands of perfect individuals* generate such a degree of spiritual pride, that even Wesley himself found no slight difficulty in maintaining them; and it is only fair towards their great leader to believe, that were he now in the midst of his people, he would endeavour to remedy many of these defects.

Whitefield's zealous spirit exhausted all its energies in preaching, and his full dedication to God was honoured by unbounded success. The effect produced by his sermons was indescribable, arising in a great degree from the most perfect forgetfulness of self, during the solemn moment of declaring the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. His evident sincerity impressed every hearer, and is said to have forcibly struck Lord Chesterfield, when he heard him at Lady Huntingdon's. At his death there was only one young man to be found, who had caught the fire of his zeal, possessed similar powers of eloquence, and was actuated by the same self-denying and disinterested spirit. This

was Mr. Rowland Hill, who appeared in many respects to have been cast in the same mould. His doctrines, his preaching talents, his popularity, his want of any definite system, were all Whitefield again. At first, Wesley commended the exertions of the youthful itinerant, especially after he heard, that in the fulness of his catholic spirit, he had attended a watchnight at Leeds; and young Rowland was flatteringly assured, that the next of those meetings was "*very unlike* the one" they had when he was there! Mr. Hill was, however, not quite so easily caught as was perhaps imagined; and we have seen with what severity he was afterwards attacked by Wesley, both in his writings and from the pulpit, when he began to take part in the Calvinistic controversy, the mode of conducting which he seemed to regret more and more, as each successive year brought him nearer to a heaven of perfect love. I believe both the vicar of Everton and his young friend were drawn into the dispute by the imputations cast upon their dead and living fellow-labourers; for soon after the Bristol meeting in 1771, caused by the edict of Lady Huntingdon relative to the minutes of Conference of the preceding year, Berridge wrote thus to Mr. Hill—"The late contest at Bristol seems to turn upon this hinge, whether it shall be *Pope John* or *Pope Joan*. My dear friend, keep out of all controversy, and wage no war but with the devil."<sup>7</sup> Had the excellent giver of the counsel followed it himself, and thus set an example of forbearance, it would have been the means of saving Mr. Rowland Hill from many hindrances in his early career, and many painful reflections in later years.

<sup>7</sup> This letter, which is in my possession, is dated Oct. 20th. 1771: the Bristol meeting was in August of the same year.

The position which Mr. Rowland Hill occupied in the midst of good men at this time was very remarkable. The followers of Whitefield flocked round his standard, owned him as their leader, and acknowledged that their drooping cause was revived through his instrumentality, both in London and in various parts of the kingdom. His appearance in every place was the signal for a revival, and there is reason to believe that thousands were awakened under his ministry. By the methodists, Mr. Hill's doctrines were altogether misrepresented; for he certainly never was a whit behind Wesley in declaring the free invitations of the gospel but only marked more distinctly the important truth, that the ability to accept them through faith must be given us of God. He preached for the first time at his curacy, from 1 Cor. ii, 1, 2, on June 20th, 1773; and after a clear and faithful exposition of his text, concluded in these words—"Such is the salvation that my whole soul prays you may receive. No labours of mine, such as they are, will ever be thought too much for the accomplishment of these glorious purposes. Suffer me, therefore, to conclude by beseeching you, by all that is dear and tender, to lay these things most closely to heart. While I thus address you, I feel the most affectionate sympathy towards you that words can possibly express. I pray you, therefore, to go home, and lay this my first message to heart. The expanded arms of a dear Redeemer are now open, to embrace every returning prodigal that is enabled to receive this gospel call. None are too vile for Mercy to receive. The Lord of love has given you the promise; *Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* Even so Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> John vi, 37.

At the time when Mr. Rowland Hill delivered the "Gospel Message"<sup>9</sup> to his parishioners at Kingston, the doctrines contained in it were too seldom taught from the pulpits of our church; but though such ministers were comparatively few in number, they were happily not extinct. Mr. Hill's sermon was dedicated to the incumbent of his parish, the Rev. James Brown, whom he calls "a brother beloved in the gospel of our God," who vigilantly watched over the spiritual interests of their joint charge, while his curate was engaged in itinerating. Mr. Hill, when a young man, looked almost upon every place he came to as a fortress of Satan, to which it was right to lay siege, and he endeavoured to effect his object, not only by attacking external bulwarks, but by undermining the very foundation of the stronghold. To this end, he commenced with declaring the depravity of human nature, and described in forcible language the consequences of the fall, of which the following striking specimen is found in his first discourse at Kingston:—"When our first parents were sent forth from the hands of their Creator, their hearts being the direct transcript of his moral image, they appeared the completest workmanship of a holy God, [and] were blessed with a nature as spotless and pure as an angel could possess. All love, all peace, all joy, all delight in, and conformity to the will of God that made them, were the continual inmates of their happy breasts. Not the least taint of the minutest impurity had they to disturb their peace, but all was heaven and consolation in the Lord. God pronounced this, his last work, to be *very good*, and as such, took de-

<sup>9</sup> This sermon was printed for the benefit of the poor of Kingston, under the title of The "Gospel Message, being the substance of a sermon delivered in the Parish church of Kingston, near Taunton, June. 20, 1773, by the Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M."



light in the creature that he had made—Such was man, while blessed with innocence before the fall; but how dreadful were the consequences of the first transgression! How was God's workmanship robbed of all its holiness and grandeur thereby! How was this once glorious temple of the Holy Ghost prostituted to iniquity, and converted into the most hateful den of filthy lusts and vile abominations! Which of you can deny this, who either reads his bible or reads himself? from *Genesis* to *Revelation* all scripture declares this awful truth, that as soon as ever man fell, immediately was he deprived of every thing that was good, and dreadfully filled with every thing that was bad." He proceeds, "as the salvation procured by a crucified Redeemer, can never be regarded by any but those who have been first convinced that they are *lost* without it, the fall must be preached as an introduction to the gospel." In declaring the doctrine of original sin, Mr. Rowland Hill used to lay great stress upon the expression, *quàm longissimè*,<sup>1</sup> in our ninth article, which he would translate, *the furthest possible*; but whatever his opinions on the mysterious subject of election may have been, nothing could be more decided than his invitation of sinners to Christ. As an instance, I will give the concluding appeal of his sermon on the death of his friend Rouquet.—"Every moment brings you nearer to eternity. How then will you bear to stand in the presence of a holy sin-avenging God, whose authority you have defied, and whose gospel you have hitherto despised? O that some alarming word might constrain you to fly, hastily to fly, from the wrath to come! Death and destruction alone are before you while you continue living in.

<sup>1</sup> The expression is, "ab originali justitiâ quam longissimè distet, &c."



sin. But thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift ! Christ is revealed as the salvation of the lost ; whosoever cometh shall certainly be received, for his promise stands, *he will in no wise cast them out ; the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, are all alike to him.* He loves to magnify the riches of his mercy to the returning sinner. Such is the adorable Christ that is now ready to snatch you as brands from the burning, and make you standing monuments of mercy and salvation. The same Lord that called our brother from his sins, saved him by his grace, and has now brought him to glory, stands waiting to receive the basest that lives upon earth. O that I could prevail ! I point you to that lovely sacrifice, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world ; to his mercy I commend you, and may his salvation be the happy portion of all our hearts." That such was the tenor of Mr. Rowland Hill's preaching in his latter days, is known to the multitudes who heard him ; but my object is to vindicate his ministerial character from the doctrines imputed to him, while he was the associate of Toplady, and the follower of Berridge.

Notwithstanding the irregularities of Mr. Rowland Hill, he lived on terms of most affectionate union with the zealous clergy, who agreed with him in doctrine, and felt the importance of the momentous truths he taught. Equally opposed by the world as himself, they united with him in the bonds of the gospel. Wherever the depravity of man's nature, salvation as it is in Christ Jesus, the necessity of regeneration, and justification by faith, were faithfully preached, a spotless life proved no defence against a multitude of enemies. Those who upheld the dignity of human nature, could not endure the humbling declaration of

their lost and helpless condition ; but in contending against this truth, they proved themselves to have less light in the day of christianity, than heathen philosophers possessed during the night of Pagan darkness. Even Plato declared the result of his observations on man, to be a conviction that evil was hereditary in his nature,<sup>2</sup> from which, through ignorance of the true remedy, he laments that no refuge can be discovered.<sup>3</sup> "I have heard," says this philosopher, "from wise men, that *we are dead*, and our body is *a tomb* ;"<sup>4</sup> but this doctrine, during the early life of Mr. Hill, drew down upon him and his friends every species of obloquy, hatred, and persecution, from those who forgot that they were giving, by their violence, a practical demonstration of the very truths they were contending against.

The same ties which united Mr. Rowland Hill to many of his pious brethren in the church, bound him also both to zealous laymen and active nonconformist ministers. They all gazed so intensely on the light to which they pointed, that minor objects were lost in the full blaze of its celestial beams. In a letter addressed to Mr. Burder, Mr. Rowland Hill observes—"Consider, my dear brother, with what a united heart and spirit, you and I travelled through the North of England in our younger days ; not an idea struck us but repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." This was the exact state of the case: they laboured together to uproot up the noxious plant of unbelief by its roots, and to raise in its stead the tree of life ; and the singleness of their design will cause

<sup>2</sup> His expression is σύμφυτον ἐκάστω κακὸν καὶ νόσημα.

<sup>3</sup> ἀποφυγὴν οὐδεμίαν μηχανᾶται.

<sup>4</sup> Ἐγώ γε ἤκουσα τῶν σοφῶν, ὥς νῦν ἡμεῖς τεθνήσκουσιν καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα ἔστιν ἡμῶν σῆμα.

their failings to be forgotten and forgiven in these days, when the essential portions of the principles they upheld, are widely diffused throughout the globe, and extensively honoured in our nation.

While the parties into which zealous men had been divided, waged a controversy of *principle* with the world, they differed amongst themselves in a great degree, though not altogether, about *words*. In his sermon on Jer. xxiii, 6, *the Lord our righteousness*, Wesley makes these admirable remarks—"Men may differ from us in their opinions as well as their expressions, and, nevertheless, be partakers of the like precious faith. It is possible they may not have a distinct apprehension of the very blessings which they enjoy: their ideas may not be so clear, and yet their experience may be as sound as ours." He likewise deprecates our being "rigorous in requiring others to use just the same expressions" as our own. At the conclusion of his sermon on attending the church service, Wesley also says—"nearly fifty years ago, a great and good man, Dr. Potter, then archbishop of Canterbury, gave me an advice for which I have ever since had occasion to bless God: 'If you desire to be extensively useful, do not spend your time and strength in contending for or against such things as are of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open notorious vice, and in promoting real essential holiness.' Let us keep to this: leaving a thousand disputable points to those, that have no better business than to toss the ball of controversy to and fro." This determination, like the advice of Berridge to Mr. Rowland Hill, was most excellent: but when heated by disputation, how do the best of men forget to abide by their own counsel. In the sermon on the "Wedding Garment," we find Wesley

calling the opinion of those who believed the "linen white and clean," in which the saints will appear before God, to be the imputed righteousness of Christ, *Antinomian jargon!* This was not in itself a very gentle expression, and certainly rather contradictory to the sense conveyed in the verse, which he quotes from his Methodist hymn book, in a sermon on "The Lord our righteousness," as containing a proper explanation of his sentiments :

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, *my glorious dress* :  
'Midst flaming worlds, *in these array'd*,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

If Wesley did not choose to toss the ball of controversy to and fro, he undoubtedly threw it very hard at supporters of the doctrine of election, when he asserted in his sermon on "Free Grace," that they, though unintentionally, represented "the Most High God as more cruel, false, and unjust, than the devil." To say nothing of using language such as this, the unfairness of it must be evident, to all who know how constantly those whom he attacked endeavoured to magnify the infinite love of God to a sinful world. However contradictory the doctrines of Whitefield and others may have appeared to Wesley, they could not be more so than the expressions just quoted from the works of the latter, nor than his notions on perfection, when he says that it is not the perfection of angels, or of Adam, nor does it "exclude ignorance, and error, and a thousand other infirmities." Now it is a singular kind of *perfection*<sup>5</sup> that lacks all these requisites ; and is much

<sup>5</sup> Vid. sermon on the text, *let us go on unto perfection* : Heb. vi, 1. The Greek word *τελειότητα*, here translated *perfection*, is evidently contrasted with the expression *τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον*, and is thus admirably explained by

the same as though a man were to call a thing infinite or eternal, but at the same time premise it was not so infinite as infinity, or eternal as eternity! I am free to admit, that too great warmth was exhibited in these contests by each party, but the entire blame is not due to Mr. Rowland Hill and his friends.<sup>6</sup> Had they properly defined their different expressions before they used them, and met in the same spirit as at the Bristol Conference in 1771, the conduct of these good men might have been set forth as an example, where it can now only be mentioned as a warning. Whenever Mr. Rowland Hill had been betrayed into a degree of unbecoming warmth, he was always ready to confess it. Speaking of some remarks he had made on Fletcher, he says—"I am sorry his name was mentioned in the last pamphlet, with the least apparent disrespect, as I still hope and pray the time may come, when he will express his concern for the many gross misrepresentations of our sentiments, he hath sent forth to the world in the warmth of controversy, and gladden the hearts of thousands, who respect him as an honest though mistaken man, by renouncing merit, and exalting the Saviour, as all in all to the believing soul. This many good people have been taught to do, who

Beza—"sermonem justitiæ convenientem adultis, et ab elementalibus distinctum"—they were to leave elementary principles, and to proceed to a course of inquiry suited to a maturer growth in christianity.

<sup>6</sup> I have made these remarks upon Wesley's share in this controversy, because I think a larger portion of blame has been cast upon my venerable relative for his conduct in it than he merited. Southey observes—"On the part of the Calvinists, the most conspicuous writers were the brothers Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) and Rowland Hill, and Augustus Montague Toplady, vicar of Broad Hembury, in Devonshire. Never were any writings more thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism than those of the predestinarian champions. It would scarcely be credible that three persons of good birth and education, and of unquestionable goodness and piety, should have carried on controversy in so vile a manner, and with so detestable a spirit—if the hatred of the theologians had not unhappily become proverbial."—*Life of Wesley*, vol. ii, pp. 373, 374. Admitting that they were not free from blame, I trust this useful and eminent writer will allow that they had great provocation. Oh that the terms *Calvinist* and *Arminian* had never been invented to divide those who love our common Saviour!

still differ in some points relative to particular election and universal redemption." Watson says, that Fletcher's writings, though greatly admired among the Wesleyans, are not admitted as standards of their doctrines.

Mr. Rowland Hill had the honour of introducing Sunday schools into the metropolis of his native country, institutions which have, when properly managed, been most efficient aids to a faithful preaching of the gospel, and are the legitimate field for an exercise of well regulated zeal, in such laymen as are willing to devote themselves to the work of teaching. The bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley, viewed these rising institutions with suspicion, and made some severe remarks upon them, in a charge to the clergy of his diocese. His objections were replied to by Mr. Hill, in a sermon on the *origin, present design, and real utility* of Sunday schools; in which he assures his lordship, his notion that they were mixed up with political views was unfounded, and that any teacher would be instantly dismissed who taught any thing of the kind, except obedience upon scriptural principles to the powers that be. Education, considered in the abstract, cannot be pronounced a benefit in a moral or a civil sense: that depends entirely, by the blessing of God, on what is taught, and the spirit in which it is conveyed.<sup>7</sup> Instruction, through a wrong medium, is like the rays of the sun concentrated and transmitted through the focus of a burning glass, the effect of which is to ignite and consume, not to enlighten.

That Whitefield, Wesley, Hill, and others, were the means of not only awakening numbers who at-

<sup>7</sup> See some excellent remarks on this subject in a late charge of that most exemplary and universally respected prelate, the bishop of Winchester.



tended on their preaching, but of frequently exciting the zeal that was wanting in many of the ministers of our church, is a fact which it is impossible to deny; but wherever the clergy began to exert themselves with due diligence, there a check was immediately given to the spread of irregularity. This effect was always foretold by Mr. Rowland Hill, whom nothing seemed to gratify more thoroughly, than to see himself deserted through the influence of clergymen, who, to use his own expression, "preached the doctrines from their hearts they had subscribed with their hands." I have frequently said to him—"Sir, such a one does not come to your chapel now"—"No," he would reply, "I should *scold* him well if he did, to leave such a minister as he has in his parish church." Mr. Hill was also fully alive to the freedom, notwithstanding imaginary restraints, possessed by the parochial clergyman, compared with the fettered situation of a minister dependent upon the uncertain favour, and under the direction of his flock: the sheep guiding the shepherd. "I certainly," I have heard him say, "pity a priest-ridden people, wherever they are to be found, all the world over; but a *people-ridden priest* is a still greater object of compassion." Happily, the laws of our establishment provide against both these evils, allowing the people full liberty of conscience, but placing the minister beyond the reach of those capricious fancies, in which the majority of any congregation may choose to indulge. Thirty-two years before his death, Mr. Rowland Hill thus addressed his flock in Surry chapel—"I have a right to declare my predilection in favour of our own establishment. Her public liturgy is a public blessing to the nation; nor is there a church upon the earth that so much promotes the



abundant reading of the word of God. While, therefore, I love her constitution, I may grieve over a fatal declension from her original doctrines, and wish for her further reformation; still, as she is, may she stand!" Living as he did to see a daily increasing diligence in her members, from the highest to the lowest, and a disposition to make such wise modifications in her system as the lapse of time may have rendered necessary, he deprecated still more strongly any thing approaching to demolition, a feeling in which, it is but fair to add, many temperate, conscientious dissenters fully participate.

I have in this chapter endeavoured to point out the situation which Mr. Rowland Hill filled in the midst of his contemporaries, and the motives by which he was guided, during the early days of a religious revival in our country. The more recent acts of his life have been sufficiently adverted to in other parts of this volume, and are fresh in the recollection of the public. He however frequently committed the mistake of encouraging pious young men to become preachers, who had a gift of speaking, without the other essential requisites for such an important function; differing in this particular from the practice, not only of the church, but of the majority of dissenters, who bestow much pains in training their candidates for the sacred office. The mode of ministerial tuition adopted by the latter, has often been held up as more calculated to effect the object in view, than the course of study prescribed by our universities, but I think without due consideration. Lord Bacon held it to be an error, that scholars in his days, "came too unripe" to the pursuits of logic and rhetoric; and the same observation will apply to the study of divinity, which is best

apprehended by minds first subjected to the discipline of a regular course of academical learning. Many of the most distinguished ornaments of our courts of law, prepared themselves for those attainments by which they have risen to deserved eminence, by aspiring to and gaining the highest honours of Oxford or Cambridge; and brought to the arduous task of learning their profession, an intellect sharpened and set in order for the 'work, by a previously well-regulated exercise of the reasoning powers, and a classical cultivation of the taste. The same principle applies to the study of theoloy,<sup>8</sup> a premature learning of which leads only to superficial and unprofitable knowledge, because the understanding itself has not been previously raised above the capacity of youth, by due and well-regulated degrees. How far preparatory exercises may be made to bear more strongly on the after life of practice, is another question; but if ever any false notions of preparation for action, be allowed to supersede the long established system of mental training, we shall cease to enjoy many blessings of which we may be justly proud, and which are so much to be ascribed to the erudition, as well as to the zeal of clerical members of the church of England. Learning combined with piety, like what is called *toning* in a print, gives grace and beauty to the impression.

In my humble attempt to delineate the character of my beloved relative, I trust I have not fallen into the error of concealing his failings; I feel, therefore, that I may venture to conclude, by pointing to a few of those graces of which he was a bright example. The

<sup>8</sup> It ought, however, to be remarked, that the study of the Greek Testament, of the Evidences, and various theological works, is far from being neglected in our Universities, where also great encouragement is given to proficients in the Hebrew language.

first of these, is the devotion of his youth to the service of God. While yet a boy at school, he was the means of the conversion of some of the same tender age as himself, the remembrance of which shed a beam of peace and joy, over the entire course of his long protracted journey through life. This work will not be written in vain, if the history of Mr. Rowland Hill and his pious relatives, be the means of inducing any youthful reader to seek the same happiness they found in the enjoyment of early piety.

Another excellency which shone brightly in this eminent servant of Jesus Christ, was the highest spirituality, accompanied with the deepest humility. Although the love of approbation was the leading quality of his mind, he never once forgot, in the midst of the applause which welcomed him every where in his latter days, to prostrate himself in dust and ashes before God, and the riper he became in grace, the more fervent were his supplications for humility.

Mr. Hill was also an example to every christian, in the retirement of his family. It was impossible to be the inmate of his house and not love him ; he neglected none of those little acts of kindness, which make up the sum of human happiness in private life ; and his uniform cheerfulness gave an inexpressible charm to the circle of his fireside. With respect to his conduct to his servants and dependants, the very words he used in eulogizing the memory of Rouquet, are applicable to himself. "He beheld his servants as fellow-creatures, and knew that they had as much right to happiness as himself. Disdainful looks, proud, snappish, severe speeches, which some can make use of upon every supposed offence, were never seen or heard from him, hence none of those changes appear-

ed among his servants, which so sadly disgrace the families of many. . From the best of "principles they were bound to serve him, the principle of love."<sup>9</sup>

I may also use Mr. Hill's description of the character of Rouquet as a friend, to describe his own. "As a friend, from *a very intimate acquaintance with him*, give me leave to bear my testimony, that one more constant and sincere, I never found; to have equalled him would have been difficult, to have excelled him impossible. And no wonder; an experimental knowledge of the *friend of sinners*, is the only true basis upon which real disinterested friendship can be built. From the best of motives, therefore, he was of a more generous turn, than to love in prosperity alone: in adversity he was the same, his conduct was invariable throughout."<sup>1</sup>

Another characteristic of Mr. Rowland Hill was a spirit of universal disinterested benevolence, such as rendered him truly deserving of the affectionate testimony given to his worth by the bishop of Winchester, who, in addressing the members of the British and Foreign Bible Society soon after his death, described him as an individual "associated in their minds with every thing pious and benevolent." I have before alluded to his courtesy towards visitors and applicants of every kind, and the unbounded generosity with which he relieved the necessities of those who he knew intended no imposture. All ministers have not the means of giving to the needy, but all may be "*pitiful and courteous*."

The last trait in the character of my venerable guardian I shall mention, is the determination he

<sup>9</sup> Funeral sermon on the death of Rouquet, p. 19.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 19, 20.

acted on to go nowhere but *as a minister*, the consequence of which was, that he was universally useful. I do not so much allude to his public engagements, as to his private intercourse with his friends, and all who were favoured with his acquaintance, will acknowledge that he appeared as much a pastor in their houses, as he did when urging them, in animated appeals from the pulpit, to walk in the light of the Lord. Whenever, also, he saw any thing in the private life of his friends which he considered inconsistent with a profession of religion, he never failed to point it out, but with such evident kindness and delicacy, that defects were corrected, without feelings being wounded. Where, however, gentle remonstrance was unavailing, he did not scruple to rebuke the faults of his people.

To draw folk to heaven with fairness,  
By good example, this was his business.  
But if he knew any person obstinate,  
Whether he were of high or low estate,  
Him would he reprove sharply for the nonce.  
A better priest I trow, no where there is ;  
He waited after no pomp or reverence ;  
He made himself no spiced conscience,  
But Christ's lore, and his apostles twelve  
He taught, but first he followed it himself.

CHAUCER.

THE END.

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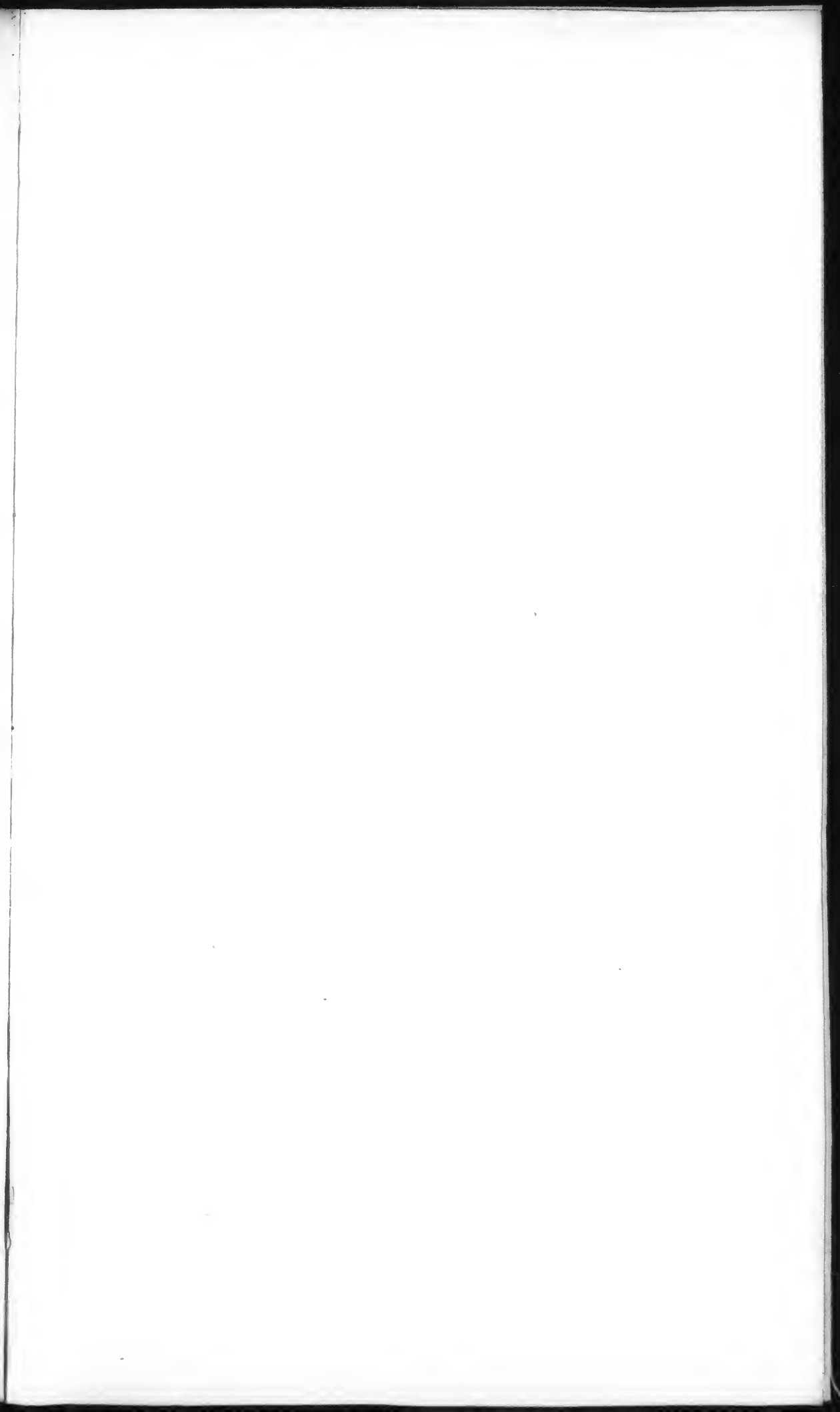
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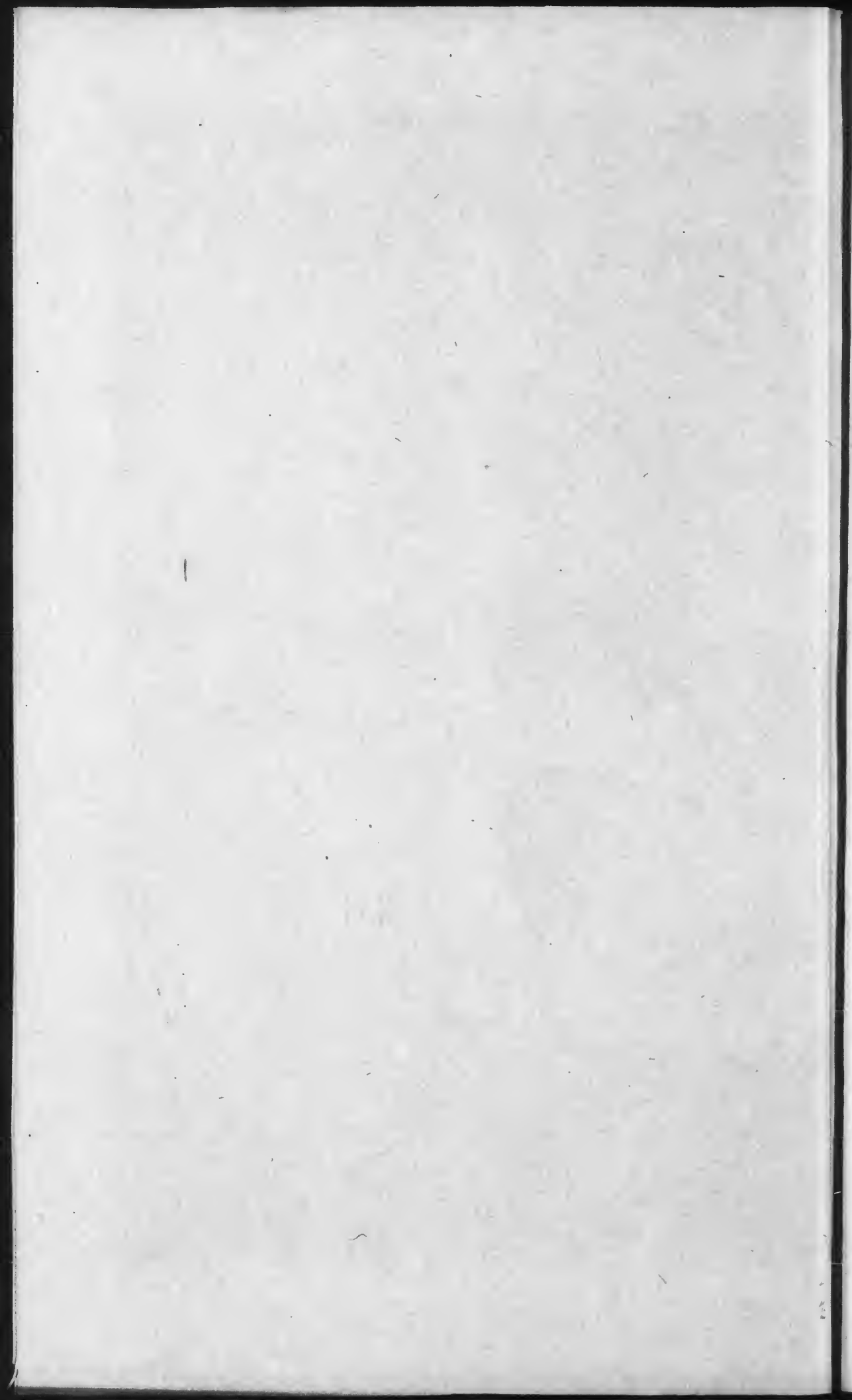
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